Sunday, August 7, 2005 ★★ Vol. 21 / No. 198

Muntinlupa City placed under state of calamity
METRO / A17

RP, other Asian stocks continue to slide
BUSINESS / B1

DA says rice supply enough despite drought
ACROSS / A13

Taliban threaten more kidnaps of foreigners
WORLD / A19

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED [illegible] VIEWS

Hiroshima survivors speak out

NEW YORK—IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE HBO's (meriting documentary on survivors of the one atomic bombs dropped on Japan appearing on an American TV network 10 or 20 years after the event. Filmmaker Steve Okazaki tried—and failed—to make it for the 50th anniversary of the event.

There is apparently enough emotional tone (more bulk) up to allow the HBO premiere of "White Light/Black Rain: The Destruction

A BOY looks at a huge photograph of Hiroshima after the 1945 atomic bombing, as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum on Monday Japan marked the 62nd anniversary of the bombing with a solemn ceremony ALCO

Palace: Broadband no go

Apostol: Where's copy of contract?

By Michael Lim Ubac, Nico T. Dizon and Jeannette I. Andrade

THE CONTROVERSY OVER the $329-million national broadband network (NBN) contract that went to ZTE Corp. of China was yesterday reduced to a paper chase.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's legal adviser, Sergio Apostol, said the project could not be implemented because the contract was nonexistent.

"How can we implement? There are no papers. There are no contracts," spoof-said when asked about the status of the ZTE contract.

The Philippine government's copy of the contract was stolen shortly after Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Vu Feng, ZTE vice president, signed it on April 21 in the presence of Ms. Arroyo.

Also stolen was the Philippine copy of the $400 million contract to build a satellite-based backbone for the Department of Education's Cyber Education Program (CEP).

Both the NBN and CEP contracts were signed in Boao, China, on the same day. The projects were to be financed by a concessional loan from China.

Two professors at the University of the Philippines' School of Economics said these can be used for the NBN and CEP deals.

Economics professors Raul V. Fabella and Emmanuel S. de Dios said the two projects seem likely to end up being a

PALACE 8A

STUDENTS in flip-flops trudge their way home in a heavy downpour along Ayala Boulevard in Manila. The rains were a welcome respite in Metro Manila and Luzon after weeks of very dry weather. [illegible]

Heavy rains give farmers hope

By the Inquirer Northern Luzon, Inquirer Central Luzon and Tj Burgonio

RAIN HAS BEEN falling incessantly in Cagayan and Isabela since last week, giving farmers hope that their crops would be saved from the effects of the dry spell.

While the rains were not strong enough to increase water levels in reservoirs in these regions, it was more than enough to relieve crops hit by the dry spell.

In Baguio City, a weather bureau official said the rains were brought about by an incoming storm, not the cloud-seeding efforts in various areas of Luzon.

The sudden rain in most parts of Metro Manila yesterday caught many commuters without their umbrellas and rain gear, but

HEAVY, A11

Cayetano bags prized blue ribbon committee

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE CONTEST SENATE COMmittee on accountability of public officials and investigations, popularly called the blue ribbon committee, went to opposition Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano last night as the Senate began organizing its 36 standing committees.

Although a neophyte senator, Cayetano bagged the blue ribbon committee which has been the subject of a tug-of-war between the administration and opposition blocs in the Senate.

The opposition had wanted the blue ribbon committee to go to an opposition senator, while the administration bloc wanted this Joker lawyer to remain leadership of the committee.

Arroyo refused to chair any other committee at this time. Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who made no secret of wanting the blue ribbon committee, also declined to chair any other committee.

The rest of the 21 senators, including detained Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, were given committees.

Seeking his last term as Taguig

CAYETANO, 8A

Claudio latest on list of ailing Cabinet execs

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

ADD PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL Adviser Gabriel Claudio to the list of Cabinet officials who have fallen ill while working under a seemingly indefatigable President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Claudio, 52, went on a one-month medical leave yesterday to undergo surgery. Claudio said he has congenital scoliosis, for which he already had surgery in the 1970s.

News that Claudio had taken a medical leave coincided with a report that 76-year-old Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez was about to be discharged from an undisclosed hospital where he had been treated for bleeding ulcers.

"There's renewed instability and severe compression in the upper lumbar section that have been causing me severe lower

CLAUDIO, 8A

If you have dreams, get a transplant

By Inero R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—"IF YOU HAVE dreams you want to fulfill, then get a transplant. But if you don't, don't bother."

This was the advice that organ transplant surgeon Dr. Alvin Ruiz gave to 28-year-old Leonard Abella, who has a chronic kidney ailment.

Abella, a jobless woman from San Fernando town in Cebu, had been on dialysis for almost a year.

Dan Ian Jacket, Idiatic, and the

IF YOU, A8

Pacquiao conqueror leaves friend

By Christian V. Esguerra

AFTER SMASHING MANNY Pacquiao caused sickness in the last elections and then soundly thrashing him at the polls, Rep. Gloria Macapa

PACQUIAO, A15

ORGAN TRANSPLANT

Keen demand fuels global trade in body parts

SPECIAL REPORT

HONG KONG—DOCTOR LEE COY his liver from an executed prisoner in China, Kazuo bought a kidney for his sister for $5,500 in Egypt, Hakan a bidding over the $50,700 for one of his kidneys in Istanbul.

A dire shortage of donated organs in rich countries is sending foreigners with end-stage illnesses to poorer places, like China, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Colombia and the Philippines, to buy a new lease on life.

Lee, a 52-year-old chief salesway technician in Hong Kong, was diagnosed with liver cancer in January 2005, but doctors denied him a transplant because they feared the cancer would spread.

A friend told Lee about a transplant hospital in China's northeastern Jilin city and he signed up for a place. In April of that year, he paid $34,500 for a transplant. The surgery saved his life.

"The hospital has connections with a lot of prisons," Lee told Reuters. "Prisoners from executed prisoners have [illegible]

KEEN DEMAND, A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mostly Cloudy with Rain

Second FRONTPAGE

GMA sends docs to Mindanao

By Jaime Laboy-Jamilarna and Christine Avendaño in Manila, Julie T. Alipala and Charlie C. Santos in Mindanao

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY sent doctors and medical personnel to attend to people affected by the fight between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Zamboanga and Basilan and warned the rebels that they face grim consequences if any harm should befall the medical team.

"These medical professionals are on a mission of compassion. They will treat people whether for you have sustained by your belligerent actions. The peace we have pursued would have allowed them to join the rest of the nation in productive pursuits," Ms Arroyo said in a speech at the 21st anniversary of St. Luke's Heart Institute in Quezon City.

"Akoma shows and Simbo will come to you," she said, referring to the god of the dead in Greek mythology.

The President dispatched the medical mission as the military was poised to hunt down those behind the beheading of 10 of the 14 Marines killed during an ambush by the MILF in Basilan.

The original deadline for the MILF to surrender those who murdered the Marines last month was extended by the President to give the joint government-MILF ceasefire committee time to investigate the incident, the beheading of the Marines.

War breaks out in Basilan

Shortly after the President delivered her strongly-worded speech, war broke out in Basilan.

A military official confirmed that members of the Marine Retaliation Landing Team 8 (MRLT-8) who were establishing position in Ramayan Sunghayan in Ushaan Pekan town were attacked by unidentified members of the Abu Sayyaf Group at 5:30 p.m. yesterday.

Three hours earlier, during a National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) meeting in Zamboanga City, director Glenn Rabonza said, "There is no end," as he said his staff has mediated a contemporary plan in case war erupted in Basilan.

The military source confirmed that the clash lasted for 35 minutes and mortar shelling was ongoing.

Alhaika Mayor Jakilan Kasnin, whose town is adjacent to Ushaan Pekan, confirmed the shelling.

"Mangyang ngayon (as of 7:30 p.m.) may shelling pa," claiming Marines rung 60mm mortars (There is shelling up to now. The Marines are using 60mm mortars)," Kasnin said, adding that there were still no reports of injuries or deaths.

Evacuees

Sabcaya, who is also administrator of the Office of Civil Defense, said that before the shelling, some 1,229 families or 6,984 individuals had been displaced in Albaika, Tipo-Tipo and Sumisip towns in Basilan.

The NDCC earlier said 12,000 families were displaced in Basilan and Sheriff Aguksuan following the roaming up of both government and MILF forces.

Secretary Raul Nantes Lemon of the Department of Social Welfare and Development to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said that close to 80,000 people or about 18,000 families were displaced in Maguindanao, Basilan and Sulu.

"We just learned that there are still IDPs [internally displaced persons] in Sulu last night. We don't have exact figures, but the great percentage of displacements is not in Basilan but in Maguindanao," he said.

In Maguindanao, Lemon said, residents were displaced not only by the massing up of armed forces but also by floods due to heavy rains.

He said a total of 60,266 people had been displaced in Maguindanao.

US confirms Abu Sayyaf, NPA involved in drug trafficking

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE THIRTEEN ABU SAYYAF GROUP (ASG) has expanded its regular money-making activities of kidnapping and arms smuggling to include illegal drugs trafficking, according to the latest report surveying the global drug situation released by the United States department of State.

The "2007 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report," prepared annually by the department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs for submission to the US Congress, described the efforts of key countries in attacking all aspects of the international narcotics trade in 2006.

In the Philippines, the report said, the Philippine National Police officials continued that ASG members were engaged in providing security to marijuana planters, protecting the operations of drug trafficking organizations and drug distributors, particularly in Jolo and Tawi-Tawi, in exchange for cash payments that help fund their operations.

According to the report, the involvement of insurgents and terrorists in drug trafficking has strong history in the Philippines.

It said the communist-led New People's Army had been involved in large-scale marijuana cultivation in the Cordillera Region of Northern Luzon since the mid-1980s.

"The NPA has generated funding through the drug trade from a variety of means, including extension of 'trafficker tax' in the form of a 'revolutionary' tax for providing security to marijuana plantations and direct participation in marijuana cultivation, processing and operations. Current information from sources in the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines indicate that NPA involvement in the marijuana trade continues in North Luzon and Southern Mindanao," the report said.

The report said the NPA "appears continued to be a major transshipment point for the further export of methamphetamine hydrochloride (known locally as "shabu") of foreign manufacture to Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea and the US, including Guam and Saipan."

Philippine law enforcement authorities continued to focus efforts on disrupting major trafficking organizations and dismantling large clandestine drug laboratories.

It said the supply of crystal methamphetamine had decreased because of continued aggressive efforts to seize clandestine drug laboratories in Metro Manila.

The report said that while PNP and Philippine Air Force officials had expressed a desire to eradicate marijuana cultivation, lack of fuel for helicopters necessary to access remote sites in the mountains of Luzon and Mindanao hindered aerial eradication operations.

The report said the "most crippling operational weakness" of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency was the lack of a functioning laboratory.

"Chemicals, arrests and exhibits have robbed the laboratory of experienced staff. In addition, laboratory equipment is outdated and inadequate. Chemists can only perform field tests, normally conducted by arresting officers at a crime scene in the US," it said.

Earth slide kills 7, hurts 5

MARIA CITY—SEV- en persons were killed, four of them children, while five others were injured after a landslide hit a far-flung village in Mayo, Compostela Valley on Monday.

Elgot Salario, information officer of the Office of Civil Defense-Southern Mindanao, said the incident happened at around 11:30 a.m. in Sitio Riverside, Barangay Maasin.

Salario said the victims were buried under boulders that rolled down from the hilly part of the village. He said the soil and boulders were loosened by heavy rains over the past few days.

The bodies of the victims were retrieved by 4 p.m. yesterday. Their identities, however, were still being verified.

One of the five victims, Salario said, was a girl estimated to be between one and five years old. Two boys and a 17-year-old girl were also killed.

Chief Supt. Andres Caro, regional police chief, told AP by phone: "So far seven are dead and the recovery operations are still ongoing."

The landslide site was adjacent to the Masara Gold Mine of the Apex Mining Co., which is partly owned by UK-based Crest Gold Corp.

Caro said the site was far from the gold rush town of Diwalwal, also in Compostela Valley, which Hollywood actor Josh Hartnett is filming the movie "I Come with the Rain." Jeffrey M. Tupas and Dennis Jay Santos, Inquirer Mindanao; AP

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She is also amazed with **ReFirme®**, the latest non-surgical way to tighten, rejuvenate and "re-firm" the skin. "At first I was skeptical about it. But you know what, the effects really became evident after 45 hours! I told Sandra (Esenaliev), 'Oh my god, my skin is glowing!' Zero bags, there was no need for any powder. I just put some tint on my cheeks. It was really that good! Women should really go to Facial Care Centre."

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MAKATI ORTIGAS TOMAS MORATO BINONDO ALABANG IMUS CONGRESSIONAL PAMPANGA BACOLOD CEBU

Half of Pinoys unhappy with graft fight, survey says

FIFTY PERCENT OF FILIPINOS are dissatisfied with how the administration has been fighting injustice, graft and corruption, while 50 percent are satisfied with how the government has managed foreign relations, according to a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations.

"Dissatisfaction ... traditionally prevails on the matter of crackdown graft and corruption," the SWS said yesterday in a statement on its second quarter report. "The national administration has always received negative marks for its performance in fighting inflation, ever since it was first surveyed by SWS in November 1991."

Dissatisfaction with government performances on "ensuring no family will be hungry" was another dominant sentiment since this was first surveyed by SWS in August 2005.

The government received high marks (+110) on issues regarding helping the poor, with 52 percent satisfied and 32 percent dissatisfied.

However, the government received "clearly negative scores" (-27) on the issue of hunger among families, with 47 percent saying they were not satisfied with how it moved to "protect that no family will be hungry" compared to the 20 percent saying they were satisfied.

Meanwhile, net satisfaction on fighting crimes was "neutral" at 3, with 39 percent satisfied and 41 percent dissatisfied—a fall from the February rating of +13.

Aside from the issue of foreign relations, which gained the highest public satisfaction score at +32 (50 percent satisfied, 27 percent dissatisfied), the administration also scored high on fighting corruption at +18 (49 percent satisfied and 31 percent dissatisfied) and land distribution under land reform at +11 (44 percent satisfied and 33 percent dissatisfied).

"The national administration has typically enjoyed positive net satisfaction ratings on foreign relations, going to -7 only during the Erap (Joseph Estrada) years in 1999, 2000 and 1999-2005 said.

Corruption-tainted ex-Justice Secretary Hernando Perez convicted of murder and executed in Singapore. His conviction was met by scores of protest in the Philippines. Rafe Pedroso, Inquirer Research

LA NIÑA MAY CAUSE ROTATING BROWNOUTS AND WATER SHORTAGE

As the effects of La Niña continue to be felt, the Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) warns of impending rotating brownouts in the Luzon grid and water shortages in the Mayniad concession area.

COPW appeals to our countrymen to stay calm and avoid pointing fingers as this unexpected dry spell is causing abrupt climatic changes worldwide.

COPW ASSURES THE PUBLIC THAT MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS

COPW separately met with Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap and Herbert Consunji, President of Manila Water, and agreed to hold further sessions with both government and the private sector to discuss possible resolutions to the crisis.

Government participants to be invited are former and current DOE Secretaries Raphael Lotilla and Angelo Reyes, DENR Secretary Lito Atienza, DA Secretary Arthur Yap, ERC Chairman Rodolfo Albano, NPC President Cyril Del Callar and PSALM President Jose Ibazeta, WWSS Administrator Orlando Honrdrade, DDF Secretary Margarito Teves, and DSWD Secretary Esperanza Cabral.

From the private sector, business leaders, NGO's, power producers, ERC, NPC, PSALM, Meralco and Aboitiz Power and other distribution utilities in the Luzon grid, oil companies and new players are set to participate.

COPW SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING:

- The DOE should undertake an immediate inventory of the standby generators in the Luzon grid that were used during the Ramos presidency. This is a "fallback position" that will greatly ease rotating brownouts in the Luzon grid. COPW looks forward to seeing the results of this inventory as soon as possible.
- The EPIRA Law prohibiting any company from owning, operating or controlling more than 30% of the installed generating capacity of a grid must be strictly enforced. *THIS IS INTENDED TO PROMOTE TRUE MARKET COMPETITION AND PREVENT HARMFUL MONOPOLY AND MARKET POWER ABUSE.*

  As it is currently, Meralco, for example, sources its power from NPC (38%), FirstGen (47%) and WESM (15%).
- Also, COPW strongly proposes to the Department of Energy, Energy Regulatory Commission and the Joint Congressional Power Commission of the new congress that the total under recovery of Meralco of 77 centavos be staggered over 12 equal monthly installments and based on 90 day Treasury Bill rate plus 300 base points.

WE ALSO NEED TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING:

1. Only 397 MW of the 1,297 MW generated by the Angat, Magat, San Roque and Binga hydroelectric plants are operational.
2. These hydroelectric plants service the agricultural sector that produces 65% of the country's rice requirements as well as producers of hogs, poultry and other agricultural staples.
3. In the interest of truly developing free market competition COPW recommends that independent power producers source their own fuel, diesel and coal requirements.
4. COPW encourages factories and commercial establishments who have standby generators to exercise their right to choose whether it is more advantageous, cost-wise, to buy from power producers or operate their own standby generators.

COPW is optimistic that the consultations with government will be productive as ALL participants will be appraised of the situation and government will be proactive in issuing a weekly update bulletin.

COPW appeals to all concerned to buckle down and work together keeping in mind that at this point, price is irrelevant. The problem is SHORTAGE and it is staring us in the face.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/

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OFWs seek own exchange rate after peso gets stronger

By Jerome Aning

OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS IN SAUDI Arabia have launched an online petition asking the Philippine government to give them "special foreign exchange rates," saying the strengthening of the peso against the US dollar has affected the financial wellbeing of their families back home.

The petition (http://www.petitiononline.com/mbayani/) addressed to President Macapagal-Arroyo was posted on Aug. 1 by a coalition calling itself OFW Task Force (Special Exchange Rate).

More than 2,100 OFWs in the Middle East and elsewhere have signed the petition as far.

"Our families have enough suffering with us being detached (from them) ... Do not allow the suffering to be compounded by the fear of us losing what we have sacrificed for because our dollar earnings are being slashed by an unjustifiably fast-paced and unwarranted peso appreciation," the OFWs said in the petition.

The extent of the reduction in the OFWs' spending power, they said, was magnified by the rise in prices of commodities that should have decreased, if not stabilized, due to the strengthening of the peso.

"Now not only our families suffer from decreased budgets but also from increased prices," they said.

While some OFWs may be considering returning home with the strengthening of the peso, coming home for good "does not appear to be an attractive option either," they said.

"Our economy is good for a chosen few while working away from loved ones has no doubt been lengthened. With the peso hovering around P44-P46 per dollar, it will now take us longer to achieve our plans of saving to build a livelihood," the OFWs said.

In the petition, the OFWs are seeking a fixed 70-percent premium above the prevailing exchange rate or the rate of P50 to $1 to be given to legitimate OFWs.

Once the peso reaches P50 to $1, the premium on the rate shall be automatically lifted.

The petition proposed that the government put up a stabilization fund similar to that created for exporters, and ensure laws to outlaw the "Kuwait Contract" or Carryover Option" with financial institutions to shield future dollar remittances against sudden unfavorable peso appreciations while taking advantage of exchange rate movements that favor OFWs.

"We fully understand that this proposition for special rate may entail costs to the government, which could be material," they said. "But it is our position that those costs are by palos in comparison to the benefits we have handed to the government in the past and the benefits it will get from us in the future."

In a recent interview, Labor Secretary Arturo Brion ruled out any exchange rate adjustment for OFWs, saying the advantages of a stronger peso "far outweighed" the disadvantages.

Corrections

IN THE JUNE 17 ISSUE, a Lifestyle section story on Page F2—"Enacting a new rule in Rome"—misstated the name of one of the organizers of the Youth Night held after the canonization of St. Eugene in Rome. The organizer's name is Ana Valdes Linn ... not Regina Linn.

* * *

IN THE AUG. 6 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Broadband deal not finalized ... DP study"—misnamed Ian Raul E. Fabella is the dean of the University of the Philippines' School of Economics (UPSE). Fabella is the former UPSE dean. Emmanuel V. de Dios became the new UPSE dean on Aug. 1.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A20 misspelled the name of a Hollywood actor. The actor's name is Josh Hutcherson ... not Hutsch.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to the Inquirer, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PSI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax this No. 897-97-02/94, e-mail editor@inquirer.com.ph or corrections@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Letty Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax this No. 897-97-53/56. Jose Rondel's Ombudsman has phone number is 897-8808 Local 3422.

GMA calls all senators, not Trillanes, to meet

By Jullie Laberg-Javellana

AMING IT DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE administration and opposition senators, Malacañang has invited all but one of the 23 senators to a meeting today, not just to talk business but also peace on the political front.

"We are show first as statesmen. We do not want to define them as opposition or administration since they are already calling each other names," Secretary Cerge Remonde, chief of the Presidential Management Staff, said in a phone interview.

Remonde said 22 senators were invited to attend the meeting of the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council at 10 this morning at the state dining room in the Palace. It will be the first Ledac meeting since the election of the 14th Congress.

"We're hoping that a good number of senators will come because this is the new Congress, this is a new beginning for the President and the new Congress," Remonde said.

Remonde said Malacañang insisted all the senators except for Antonio Trillanes IV who is detained in connection with charges in connection with the failed takeover enemy of 2003.

"We leave that matter to the court as until the court decides whether it would allow him to attend the sessions [or still not invite him] because if we invite him it's like we are interfering with the court," Remonde said.

He said that aside from being the venue to discuss a common legislative agenda, the Ledac meeting is also Malacañang's way of reaching out to the opposition.

Constructive engagement

Remonde said the President would like to have a policy of "constructive engagement" with the opposition.

He recalled that in her State of the Nation Address at the joint opening of the 14th Congress on July 23, Mr Arroyo said she would not stand in the way of the presidential ambitions of her political foes.

"If half of them will attend the meeting, the President will be very happy with that. We hope that all of them will come," he said.

Some opposition senators are planning to skip the Malacañang meeting, including Loren Legarda, Jinggoy Estrada, Panfilo Lacson and Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Lacson said the opposition's stand on Malacañang-backed bills was clear: "We will support any bill that is beneficial to the country."

Lacson said the opposition believed the President would only appeal for support to pass new laws.

Had their chance

"They had their chance when they lobbied for the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program. We cannot support any new tax bills. They (Malacañang) must first show they can improve their collection and explain only the last reforms have not gone to all the courts," said Lacson.

But administration Sen. Edgardo Angara said the senators were obliged to accept the President's invitation to the Ledac because it was their job to know only the executive branch might want a certain bill passed.

"If they do not know the importance of a certain bill to the administration, how can they act on it?" Angara said.

Ledac is a mechanism of dialogue between Malacañang and Congress established by President Fidel Ramos. Its members include the Senate President, the Speaker, the majority and minority leaders of both chambers and the chairs of the different committees.

9 senators to attend

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said at least nine senators are expected to show up for the Ledac meeting, including Senate President Manuel Villar.

The Villar-led majority is composed of 11 senators, including nine who are allied with the President and six who are with Villar. The Senate President ran under the Genuine Opposition in the last elections.

Andaya said nine senators attending the Ledac would be an improvement, since the last time it was convened only seven attended.

"We want them to express, not suppress, their views," Andaya said.

Remonde said the President will present her legislative agenda and will be open to proposals from the senators and congressmen.

He said Presidential Legislative Liaison Office head Jake Laguzon will present the President's priority measures, some of which she already outlined in her Sona.

With a report from GC, Tobias and A.

Palace: Broadband deal can't be enforced

From page A1

waste of funds justify because it was not in the government's "core competence" to run, maintain and use an information technology infrastructure separate from two opposing ones carried by private telecommunications firms.

Moral backbone

They said government should address "last mile connectivity" to government agencies and public school campuses instead of building another network.

"The only backbone that the government needs today is a moral one," Tabuella and Jar Dizon said in a paper titled "Looking a gift broadband in the mouth: Why the National Broadband Network and Cyber eGovernment Project."

Spurred until before Malacañang would answer the criticisms heaped on the project, Abalos declared he proud that the contract was existed.

Details of the NBN project remain hazy at this time although the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) disagreed with Tabuella and Jar Dizon's claim that the money will come from Huawei itself, which requires a transparent bidding process.

"There are exceptions under that law, and if it's a government to government loan, that's the government will have to pay for every penny spent for the project.

Andaya, however, said the ZTE deal was not covered by the Government Procurement Act

Australia gives ₱1.6B to RP education

By Cynthia D. Balana

AUSTRALIA has approved a P1.6 billion (A$45 million) grant to fund a World Bank project to improve basic education in the Philippines, the Australian Embassy said.

The Australian government recently signed an administration agreement with the World Bank for the grant, under the Support to Philippine Basic Education Reforms (Diphed) Trust Fund, in support of the Department of Education's basic education sector reform agenda (Besra).

Counselor Sam Tuppin of the Australian Embassy in Manila said World Bank acting country director Sara Sung-ae signed the agreement in the presence of Diphed acting director Lynette Perez and AusAID first secretary Dan Mood-ie-Dindia.

The fund will be managed by the World Bank and will be implemented by the Diphed.

"Australia's initial funding of A$9[illegible] million through the trust fund is anticipated to increase further in the next four years following on the progress of Besra programs," Tuppin said.

The Diphed said it welcomed the increased support of the government to recently signed an administration agreement with the World Bank for the grant, under the Support to Philippine Basic Education Reforms (Diphed) Trust Fund, in support of the Department of Education's basic education sector reform agenda (Besra).

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The Diphed said it welcomed the increased support of the government to recently signed an administration agreement with the World Bank for the grant, under the Support to Philippine Basic Education Reforms (Diphed) Trust Fund, in support of the Department of Education's basic education sector reform agenda (Besra).

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"Australia's initial

Tourists may stay 24 mos.

CITING THE ABSENCE of mass foreign tourists, the Bureau of Immigration yesterday said it had increased up to two years the length of time visitors may stay in the country.

In a memorandum, Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said tourists may extend their stay in the country up to 18 months. After 18 months, a tourist must submit an application to the bureau's investigation regulation division (IRD) if he wants to stay up to 24 months.

Beyond 24 months, a tourist would need the approval of the commissioner, the memo said.

According to Libanan, he decided to ease the bureau's policy on visa extensions after learning that the number of tourists who extended their stay during the first semester of the year rose by 21 percent compared to a year ago.

He said the 18 visa extension office applicants from January to June this year is total of 196,172 applications for extensions from January to June, compared to 162,094 in the same period last year.

"These statistics indicate that our country is fast emerging as one of Asia's most favored tourist destinations," Libanan said in a statement. He said a total of 468,281 foreigners arrived from January to June, compared to 428,166 in the same period in 2006.

Lawyer Gary Mendoza, IRD chief, said the new policy would apply to all foreign tourists regardless of nationality. Jerome Aning

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RP, 4 countries tagged human organ hot spots

THE CLANDESTINE NATURE OF HUMAN organ trafficking makes it difficult to assess; but the World Health Organization has identified five hot spots engaged in the trade—China, Pakistan, Egypt, Colombia and the Philippines.

China

The world's most populous country is also the top host country for transplants. In July 2006, however, China banned the sale of human organs. In July this year, Beijing said it would restrict organ transplants for foreigners and give priority to sick Chinese.

About one million people in China need transplants each year, but there are only around 20,000 operations because of a shortage of donors, kidneys and other organs. Criminals' be taking organs from executed prisoners. China says all prisoners donate have given their consent.

Pakistan

Currently thought to be the world's second biggest source for the organ trade, Pakistan has no legal framework on transplantation, although a draft law that could allow the buying and selling from the deceased was passed in February this year.

Selling kidneys to brokers has become commonplace to poor villagers, with up to 1,500 "transplant tourists" visiting Pakistan to receive organs, according to WHO estimates.

Egypt

The country has no transplantation laws or legal recognition of brain death, although Cairo agrees on the need for both to regularize donations, the WHO says. High rates of liver disease have boosted demand for liver transplants as well as kidneys.

Egypt's commercial living kidney donors are typically male (95 percent), with a median age of 35. Some 78 percent reported a deterioration in health after selling their kidneys, 81 percent spent the money earned within five months, and 94 percent said they regretted donating, according to the WHO.

Colombia

All transplants, including those on foreigners, must be approved by Colombia's national health agency, and a 2004 law calls for available organs to be offered to Colombians first.

However, several websites offer new livers and kidneys in Colombia within 60 days, and the country's relative proximity to the United States has helped establish Colombia as a destination for transplant and other medical tourists seeking cheap operations.

PAKISTANI Amjad Ali points to scars left on his body after his kidney was removed in an operation outside his home in the July 2006 photo.

Philippines

A 1991 act allowed for the international donning of organs and tissues. While the Philippine Organ Donation Program recommends that live donors undergo counseling and medical evaluations, a lucrative backdoor kidney trade has flourished.

Experts have called for health insurance systems to stop reimbursing "transplant tourism" to clear claims that trafficking in organs, such as those from the Philippines for a transplant, could have health insurance cover the $95,000 (or, $10,000 of which goes to the donor). —Reuters

They stole my kidney, Egyptian says

CAIRO, EGYPT—SAYYED Mahmoud Abou Deif, a 20-year-old unemployed Egyptian, says three years ago, a man posing as a businessman promised to secure a job for him in Libya after a medical checkup at a Cairo hospital.

He says he was sedated and woke up to learn he was missing acute pain on his right side. He then found out he had lost a kidney. A day then dark stain, then Deif talked to Reuters in Cairo about his case. He removed his shirt to reveal stong deep scar on his right side.

"I had no choice," he said.

"This man overheard me talking about a vacancy as a waiter at a coffee shop. He told me 'I will help you get a job in Libya but you have to do some X-rays and tests for me.' I never made a friend of mine called him to the office of the man and his associates ... They said we won't have to pay anything.

"I did some tests ... then he said I had to stay at an apartment downtown and wait for the final heart check ... he mentioned me to a hospital where I met a doctor who planned me under a 'heart-testing machine.' I was given a sedative.

"I woke up later feeling an acute pain. I was screaming up and crying. The nurse heckled me said, 'Thank God, the surgery went fine.' I asked her, 'What surgery?' She said that I had just had my kidney removed.

"The chief was next to me. I picked it up and for the inside wife to see her head. There...I don't know how—I stood up and smashed the window ... I don't know how I stood up. the nurse passed out and I passed out right away too.

"I called the man and told him that I will never let him get away with this. He told me, 'No problem with your kidney and I had it removed for you; you should thank me.' He then gave me 4,000 Egyptian pounds ($706) and said, 'You have no proof that I have done this to you.'

"I went with my father and filed a police report. Forensic examiners proved that I had lost a kidney ... but I do not have any proof on paper that those people have done this to me ... The hospital denied that I had any operation there.

"The case was 'hot' then with the office of the public prosecutor since then. The men I have accused have denied any wrongdoing. —Reuters

The who, what, where, why of organ trafficking

LONDON (AP, IPSOS, AFP) —Technological advances have spurred a significant global market for trafficked body parts from living donors, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Demand for organ transplants has risen beyond what can be supplied by traditional cadaver donations.

Here are some facts about organ trafficking and transplantation:

Why?

+ Human or human transplantation of cell tissue and organs is recognized as lucrative and often only treatment for end-stage organ failure, such as liver and heart failure.

Who?

+ The general flow of organs is from the poor in less developed countries to rich, developed ones.

+ The majority of transplanted organs come from live, often unrelated donors, rather than using cadaveric organs. In the United States, the number of organ or kidney transplants from live donors exceeded those from deceased donors for the first time in 2003.

What?

+ Kidney transplants are by far the most frequently carried out, the WHO says. It estimates there are about 66,700 kidney transplants, 21,000 liver transplants and 6,000 heart transplants carried out annually.

+ To date, the kidneys, heart, liver, lungs, pancreas and the intestines have been successfully transplanted. The first successful kidney transplant was in 1954 and the first liver transplant in 1967.

How much?

+ Commercial living donors, usually poor and vulnerable individuals in need of money, are thought to supply 10 percent of the world's transplanted kidneys. Here are the WHO's most recent (2003) estimates for the price of one kidney: South Africa, $500; India, $1,000-$1,500; Pakistan, $1,000-$1,500; Moldova, $2,500; Egypt, $1,700-$2,750; Turkey, $3,000-$10,000; Peru, $8,000; United States, $150,000.

Where?

+ Some countries that are well known sources of donors—such as Brazil, India and Moldova...have banned buying and selling of organs. Iran is the only country in the world where it is lawful for one citizen to sell an organ to another for transplantation. Reuters

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Keen demand fuels global trade ...

From page A1

I thank the donor deeply."

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 25,000 liver transplants are carried out annually, but medical experts put annual worldwide demand at 90,000.

Demand for kidneys also exceeds supply, and that has given rise to organ trafficking and a black market for rich people and "transplant tourism" who travel to poor countries to buy body parts from people with few other means to a better living.

A donor in South Africa receives $500 for a kidney compared with $20,000 to the United States. Lack of transparency and little protection for donors have also been fuelled by international bodies to crack down on, or at least regulate, the trade.

But even in places where the trade is banned, laws are often muddled or laced with loopholes, which are sometimes deliberately created interests.

Less complicated

And the unregulated zone is much less complicated for the recipient. Any transplant procedure involving a living donor carries risks for the donor—especially for liver transplants which involve removal of part of the donor's liver. Transplantations include bleeding, infection, even death.

In the transplant trade, the recipient need not worry about, he examples, supposing a living relative to that risk.

"It is cheaper and you save

of life is not taking the risk and you don't have to care for someone you don't know. Once you pay it is discarded in a way it is disposable," said Luc Noel, a Geneva-based coordinator for clinical procedures at the WHO.

China recently banned the sale of human organs and restricted transplants for foreigners, saying it must free more demand at home for 1.3 billion organs a year.

Only 20,000 transplants are carried out in China each year. Of those, 3,000 are liver transplants and 81 percent of those use livers from dead donors.

China defended its use of organs from executed prisoners, saying consent was obtained from convicts or their families. A transplant operation using the liver of a dead donor costs around $215,000 in China.

"What is important is the transparency, it has to be open to scrutiny ... If China makes its current system open to scrutiny and very transparent, that would do good," Noel said.

In Asia, a reduced obsession with keeping the body of the deceased intact has stymied public organ donation programs.

'Kidney bazaar'

Excluding China, Asia has fewer than 200 livers donated by people afraid of their death rites away, said Lo Chung-mau, professor of hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery at the University of Hong Kong.

Pakistan, where trade in human organs is not illegal, is turning into a "kidney bazaar," said Ariffin Sagor, chief executive of Pakistan's Kidney Foundation.

There are no confirmed figures for the number of foreigners coming to the country for new kidneys. But Sagor said there were 123 centers in Lahore alone which reported more than 2,000 transplants last year from bought kidneys.

Doctors, mostly from Europe, Saudi Arabia and India, pay about $6,500 for a new kidney he said. Donors are paid $500 to $1,000 and often get no medical care after the surgery.

There is no consent in some cases, in big police around other people, including fake doctors, for abducting people, drugging them and stealing their kidneys for transplant operations.

Rules to outlaw allowing "altruistic" organ donations will also ensure the trade continues with recent payment to donors, Hopit said.

15 days

Stories of people selling their organs, especially kidneys, are not uncommon in Egypt, where more than 90 percent of its population of more than 73 million people live below the poverty line.

Kamra, who asked to be identified only by his first name because their organ trading is illegal, said it took him only 15 days to obtain a kidney for his wife who was suffering from kidney failure. He said a doctor found him a man willing to sell his kidney for $5,300.

"The first of the doctor sent

If you have dreams, get a transplant

From page A1

rest of the family decided Lemuel should have a kidney transplant rather than undergo constant dialysis—a lifelong treatment.

Mario explained the family preferred that Lemuel have a normal life rather than be held hostage to his debilitating ailment.

After Mario talked to his youngest son Noel, 22, the latter agreed to donate one of his kidneys to his brother, who got married in August last year.

When the operation started early Saturday, Mario was teary-eyed as he watched the doctors operate on both sons.

Operation shown live

"I was scared," he said. Mario, his wife and other relatives were at the conference room of the Cebu Doctors University Hospital (CDUH) where the operation was shown live through video feed.

The operation involving two transplants took about four hours.

Doctor said the operation could be considered a success, initially because the transplanted kidney produced urine minutes after the operation was completed.

Mario said the cost of the operation reached about P1 million but the amount did not matter as his son would be working again.

CDUH president Purificacion V. Larracudal Jr. explained that the hospital had acquired accreditation from the Department of Health as the second facility in Cebu authorized to do kidney transplantation to users is growing need.

They want to show that Cebu can do all the things Manila can do and, perhaps, even better," Larracudal said. He noted that a number of patients had been waiting to have the operation.

Before CDUH's accreditation, the Don Vicente Sotto Memorial Hospital was the have accredited Hospital for kidney transplantation and could only do two operations a month.

CDUH administrator Oscar A. Tanseco said his hospital could accommodate as many as eight kidney transplantations per month with its eight nurses dedicated to kidney patients. Tanseco said the CDUH also plans to open additional renal rooms.

"We're very excited because we have additional facilities to accommodate kidney transplantations. We have the facility and the skills are available locally," Tanseco said.

28 surgeons

The Philippines has 28 organ transplant surgeons but there are only two of them practicing in Cebu, Rosca said. Davao has three such surgeons, Iloilo and Baguio have one each while the rest are based in Metro Manila, he added.

Rosca said a good number of patients come from the Visayas and Mindanao so he proposed many would seek treatment in Cebu.

Tanseco also said the hospital spent over P1 million to acquire medical equipment for kidney transplantation. The hospital also spent P0.5 million for the light renovation double lighting system for the operating rooms.

Tanseco could not say how much the kidney transplantation would cost although he said a similar operation at the National Kidney Transplant Institute (NKTI) could run around P1.5 million. He also said that it would be more cost-effective to have a kidney transplantation than undergoing dialysis for life.

According to Tanseco, each dialysis treatment costs a minimum of P2,000. Most a patient undergoes between two to four treatments a week, he would have to spend at least P32,000 a year for dialysis. While the patient has to spend a huge amount for a transplant, it would mean a normal life once again, he added.

Mario agreed since undergoing the operation would enable his son to need to go back to work.

According to the World Kidney Day 2007 website (www.worldkidneyday.org), some 500,000 million individuals, or about one in every 10 adults, have some form of chronic kidney disease (CKD). It also disclosed that over 1.5 million people are alive through either dialysis or kidney transplantation.

The NKTI, in its annual report, said it registered a 17-percent increase in dialysis sessions while kidney transplantations rose by almost 7 percent.

It underscored, CKD's fast consequence is the risk of developing progressive loss of kidney function and the need for dialysis or transplantation. The second is premature death from associated cardiovascular disease.

GMA orders setting up of heart, kidney, lung centers outside Metro

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESterday said she had directed the setting up of regional heart, kidney and lung centers in key provincial cities to enable people who had risky health conditions but no money to go to Metro Manila to seek treatment to have specialized centers.

Speaking at the 22nd anniversary celebration of the St. Luke's Heart Institute, Ms Arroyo said that patients in the provinces with a torn aorta, "like what my husband was operated on (but) here at St. Luke's," would be exposed to risks from the high altitude if they were to fly to Manila.

She said the funds for the health services would come from the P28 billion the government saved from its debt service.

"Debt-servicing resulting from a stronger peso can be funneled to this so it's from debt service to health service," she said.

Ms Arroyo said her administration would repay the hospital and its doctors who assisted her husband earlier this year by providing health care for the people.

"To instill permanent change we're making long-overdue investments in human and physical infrastructure. This includes billions of pesos in health care," she said.

"We're following up the pain of raising our taxes/rates, including the cut on doctors, with the gain (that only) comes from significant investments in people and projects. Only then will it really ensure that progress cannot be reversed."

Ms Arroyo said her administration had provided Phil health insurance for four million Filipino families, or 20 million people, compared to only 1,500 families which had the cards in 2001.

She said she had instructed Duque to study the possibility of Philhealth beneficiaries using its card over 66 heart consultations.

GONZALEZ

GONZALES

ROMULO

ARROYO

DE VILLA

CLAUDIO

TEJADA

Claudio . . .

From page A1

back pains," Claudio told the Inquirer.

Doctors need to operate to stabilize and decompress the areas affected by the scoliosis. Claudio's operation will be on Wednesday.

It's not allowed here for Ms Arroyo, however.

Yesterday, she announced that her husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, was back playing golf after undergoing open heart surgery four months ago.

Ms Arroyo broke the news when she spoke at the 22nd anniversary celebration of St. Luke's Heart Institute.

She cited heart surgeon Dr. Rommel Castillo and his team for having "brought my husband back from the brink of death."

"Now, he can play 18 holes of golf. And when I left Malacañang this morning he was on his treadmill," she said. "He has already put together his own healthy lifestyle as a result of all the advice that Jun (St. Luke's chief executive officer Jun Lobregat) and the rest of the doctors have been giving him, including Atilet Cervantes."

Dr. Cervantes is the First Couple's attending physician.

Back to work

Mike Arroyo in April underwent an intervention to repair a tear in his aorta.

As presidential political adviser, Claudio has oversight functions over the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, the Office of External Affairs and the Office of the Presidential Coalition Affairs.

Claudio was one of the busiest Palace officials during the last election campaign, being head of an arbitration committee which ironed out volatile poll problems.

He also holds the post of Cabinet Officer for Regional Development for Region 8.

Gonzales said he was feeling better and that he was about to be discharged from the Metro Manila hospital where he had been confined since Thursday.

He indicated he wanted to return to work as soon as possible.

Gonzales was sidelined by rumors that he would be replaced.

"It's up to them. They can replace me if they want to," he said over the phone. "But I like that; always step up when somebody becomes sick."

Gonzales declined to disclose the name of the hospital where he was treated.

Pushing to the sidelines of power has taken a toll on several other Cabinet secretaries.

In April 2001, then Executive Secretary Renato de Villa went through a triple heart bypass operation.

The following year, De Villa's successor in the Cabinet's secretary post, Alberto Romulo, himself underwent a double bypass.

Hypertension, slipped disc

About two years later, then Presidential Management Staff chief Napoleon Tajon underwent quintuple coronary bypass surgery.

And while under questioning during a Senate probe in September 2005, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales suffered from hypertension, prompting his hospitalization.

Late last year, Presidential Management Staff head Cerge Remonde underwent a spinal operation.

Four January Ignacio-Gozun himself had a brief stint in hospital in May 2005 after suffering a slipped disc, a spinal injury that made it very painful for him to stand or sit.

Ms Arroyo herself is no stranger to hospitals. In June last year, she was admitted to St. Luke's Medical Center for what doctors said were stress-related pains. The following month, she returned to St. Luke's suffering from what the hospital said was the flu.

With a report from Zaida B. Salamero in

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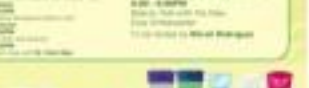

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OPINION

White elephants

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION DOESN'T EVEN know where it will get the funds for the "legacy" projects outlined by the President in her State of the Nation Address, and yet it seems determined to carry out two broadband projects that would cost $789 million. Why?

The first is the $328 million National Broadband Network project to be undertaken by the government and the Chinese telecom firm ZTE Corp. The second is the $460-million project to build a satellite-based IT backbone for the Cyber Education Program.

EDITORIAL

The intention may be good, but the means being used to carry out the two projects are questionable. In the first place, is there need for them? Two professors of the University of the Philippines School of Economics—Dean Raul V. Fabella and Prof. Emmanuel S. de Dios—have answered no. They say that the government does not need to own a broadband backbone, much less two, because two are already in existence and are being operated by private firms, one by PLDT, the other by its competitors.

Secondly, the two UP professors say the two projects are likely to end up being a waste of funds because it is not in the government's "core competence" to own, maintain and use an IT infrastructure separate from the two that are being operated by private firms.

Third of the $760 million (about P35.5 billion) in people's money that would go down the drain should the two projects later turn out to have many defects or prove to be inoperable. It would be like the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant all over again. About $2 billion in the people's money was spent on the nuclear plant without a single watt of power being generated. It remains a white elephant more than two decades after some lucky people, who received millions of dollars in commissions and kickbacks, laughed their way to the bank.

Thirdly, in the particular case of the NBN project, why does the government feel obligated to accept China's offer of financing when the two projects could very well be undertaken on a build-operate-transfer plan that does not require the disbursement of government funds? Fabella and De Dios say the government should study more carefully China's seeming generosity in offering to finance the National Broadband Network project because it is awash with $1.33 trillion in foreign exchange reserves and it will not only unload excess cash but also entice the indebted country to import Chinese equipment and products.

Fourthly, the NBN deal with ZTE Corp. of China violates the Constitution and laws on public transparency and accountability. It is the private sector that has the funds and the technical competence to undertake a project like this, so why not let the private sector do it? The transaction is being carried out without a public bidding, which is a violation of procurement laws like the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Fifthly, the Constitution provides that sovereign loans and guarantees (which is called for in the NBN project) require the prior concurrence of the Monetary Board. No such concurrence has been obtained as of this time.

It will be recalled that on Nov. 21, 2006, President Macapagal-Arroyo, presiding over a meeting on IT projects, insisted on one condition to accept the National Broadband Network proposal: no government funds are to be used. Why was this condition dropped?

The next year, on April 25, Ms Arroyo hastily left the sickbed of her husband Miguel and flew to Boao, China to witness the signing of the $329-million NBN deal with ZTE Corp. Why the urgency?

Curiously right after the contract was signed, it was reported stolen from the hotel room of the Philippine delegation. Administration officials said the contract would be "reconstituted." But how sure can we be that the "reconstituted" version would adhere faithfully to the "stolen" version?

Up to now the people, who ultimately will have to pay with their hard-earned money for the NBN project, do not know the details of the project. The situation has been such that even US Ambassador Kristie Kenney asked then Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri to express US government interest and ask for transparency in the deal.

The circumstances surrounding the NBN project are very puzzling and intriguing, to say the least. The Arroyo administration should just drop it. Or the Supreme Court, before which Rep. Rufus Rodriguez has filed a case to nullify the contract, could void the deal which is disadvantageous to the Filipino people, and possibly, illegal and unconstitutional.

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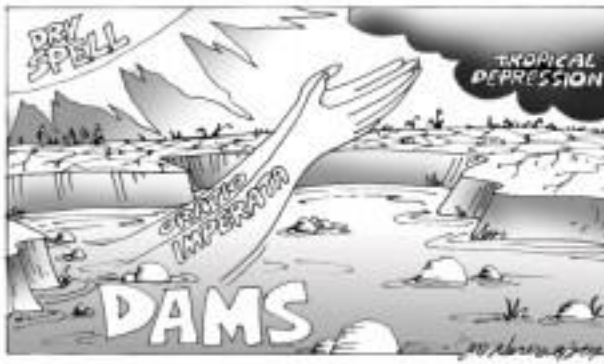


Killer haven

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"NO PLACE BARRED SHIELD SANCTUARIES murder," Hamlet muttered on the ramparts of his dank castle, in unremarked murder charging in the 13-year-old unsolved killing of Philippine hero Ninoy Aquino. Neither Pendatun or aristocrat are now reminding, one after another!

Pendatun was an honor student in both history and the Philippine Military Academy (Class 1955). He was only 22-and was engaged to be married, when dispatched to his native enclave Jolo in 1959. MIP handed him up to prison, for 1995. The trip memorized on a blazer lapel and a half trip from Cavite to Mary Headquarters on Roxas Boulevard. Normally that trip takes 20 minutes. Logbook entries, obviously, changed that.

Within this same day the news relief, sans investigation, that the cargo master had committed suicide. Bam! A "suicide note" blasted in his cabin.

Historian: Agbayani Pendatun's Phil. classmates, who painted out the different handwriting, stilted language and absence of jewelry' habits. After the National Bureau of Investigation's earlier sullen condemnation of Rodillas, they never even fussed. Pendatun's Maverick classmate, then moving now Senate floor the wizards on Navy ships indicted for smuggling Bataan, for months-on extensive authentic holdings of 14,000 board feet of illegal lumber-and logs in Sibut Zamo. That of the cargo master Rodillas, the prosecutor (Gerardo Abadia to his long time friend, Sixto Brig officer in command him, Pro-Carmona."

"Distinct from slavery" noted also Pendatun. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Secretary Angelo Reyes, suspected in Zamboanga on Sept 25, '95, the first, commanded for Capt. Ricardo Gonzales and investigative officer Lt. Ruben Roque, dashed in Cavite that day. The logs promptly vanished, like spokesmen-dynamos appeared.

Pendatun's new discoveries for straw, including peddling of high-powered weapons to rebels and of ship leaders that, spotted danger. Pendatun's parents pleaded with him to resign: "Don't go back. We have enough power cuts. Don't kill you." His reply was: "Forever my [illegible]

Most disturbing was the hasty cover-up of taxpayers' money. Or was the not think of taxpayers' money as our money. Every time we pay our taxes, or our taxes are forcibly withheld from us, we say goodbye to them. We do not think of them as "our" money. We think of them as services. If the roads and services were, like, we're lefty to have temporary repairs and compromises. If the taxes disappear in the bottomless pit of their pockets, well, that's just the way things are, it's their money. That is the reason we do not have up public officials when they are exposed for corruption in the same way that we beat up policemen when we corner them to surrender.

Yet, in fact, the taxes we pay are billions of pesos in roads and bridges that say they were built, the goodness of the heart of Mayor or Congressman Jo-and-So. Indeed, you are due in the lack of accountability as republican citizens, it is necessary to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's." We agree that they are making an investment from which they expect to get a return in the form of pork barrel or whatever commissions holds this land.

The Erap regime did not invent corruption, but like the Marcos regime it has entrenched it. Like Marcos, ERR has bestowed the same-more than Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada combined-and has left a worse deficit than Marcos or close to it. Like Marcos, GMA has refused to do anything about it. Quite simply, big time theft ruptures before-or because-we do not have to theft. The more theft it is, the more it shows. Millions of pesos, tens or spends of billions of pesos, is beyond the pale of Juan de la Cruz's experience and imagination.

That is the case where Estrada's money game completely surpassed, and eclipsed, as he himself says, we got to the point of having smuggled into a first called "looting for various names of our capture while saying it is the most efficient one." As the very least, public outrage is of greater intensity when it is the use of the state's people, and has no evidence to claim. The case was also implicated with Estrada in the crime she failed life and tried to expose and Francisco Gudani and Alexander Balinan in the case of Estrada's money. Estrada wanted to say, Both crimes had to do with theft, determined by for the worse one, which was the theft of the vote. The message is clear: it's not "Cruella, beware," it's "Whistle-blowers, beware."

Estrada's lucky if the public just gave carnival hats due.

But even more than that, the fact that Jerfrid Gudani and Balinan in particular tells us that the real question is not what makes corruption so widespread, but why we tolerate it in the first day. The Cory, Ramos and Erap administrations make, not, but they were only money, not hope; they were only the accumulation of the many and the maintenance of the rest. Like Marcos, GMA hasn't just robbed us of our money. She has robbed us of the moral floor of this nation. Like Marcos, she hasn't just robbed us of our sense of right and wrong. She has robbed us of our future. She has robbed us of the hope that pumps our hearts and minds. A people that can no longer see what is wrong with being dreaming and working, or indeed with killing, has become so used to abuse that losing the very concept of outrage.

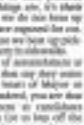
This is corruption in every sense of the word, the kind that has to do not just with abstractions but with outrageous and daring. This is the height of the obscene, the kind of thing that, in any other country, would bring down governments. That is the kind of corruption that people have passionate but rare sentiments.

What makes this so egregious?

We said it again and again during Marcos' time. Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Cause and effect

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

That is the case where Estrada's money game completely surpassed, and eclipsed, as he himself says, we got to the point of having smuggled into a first called "looting for various names of our capture while saying it is the most efficient one." As the very least, public outrage is of greater intensity when it is the use of the state's people, and has no evidence to claim. The case was also implicated with Estrada in the crime she failed life and tried to expose and Francisco Gudani and Alexander Balinan in the case of Estrada's money. Estrada wanted to say, Both crimes had to do with theft, determined by for the worse one, which was the theft of the vote. The message is clear: it's not "Cruella, beware," it's "Whistle-blowers, beware."

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Cloud-seeding outmoded technology

SOME QUARTERS ARE SUBJECTING TO THE running of vast sources in the Bicol, Pampanga, Cagayan Valley and Mindoro to cloud-seeding flights. Many have begun to complain that they're getting too much rain, in clear violation of the terms of the contracts, respectively, of the private firms and the government in the Palace. The complainers include some local representatives, some provincial governors, some farmers, some fishermen and some ordinary citizens. Some of the complaints have been made directly to the Palace. The complainers include some local representatives, some provincial governors, some farmers, some fishermen and some ordinary citizens. Some of the complaints have been made directly to the Palace. The complainers include some local representatives, some provincial governors, some farmers, some fishermen and some ordinary citizens. Some of the complaints have been made directly to the Palace.

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

pass by London so that was to a state visit to Madrid next month. But could be one way.

* * *

Two years ago, I was warned to expect not much in the round of judges for Metropolitan Foundation's Search for Outstanding Judges, coordinated by Supreme Court Justice Dante Tinga and Atty. Arthur Lim. Among the officials and military personnel we interviewed was Air Force Capt. Gerardo Legaspi, who is probably not my darling piano of the SM. We were impressed by his dedication to duty and technical capability and the fact that he didn't drink. Both extremely important qualities, especially since he was a test pilot without proper navigational instruments. Thus, when he and his assistant jumped to their boat, the Coast Guard sufficient together with their safety jackets and they were able to paddle to safety. Luckily they have lost all right. The judges interviewed by Chief Justice Davide out of the interview.

* * *

With the drought wreaking havoc on our crops and predicted to cause economic disaster, I commend Senator Lim and his chief aide that the AFP still has only one rain-making plane and it is under repair. When it flies, it's under to be mostly cloud-seeding operations. Until the AFP mobilized two transport aircraft that were performing military operations in Mindanao, but we still need many rain-making planes. Experts said that the lack was found out that Thailand has the technology to seduce rain even without available clouds. Discovered by a royal rain-making team put together by King Bhumibol in 1969 and nicknamed "Royal Rainmaker," the technology proved more effective in a monsoon cloud density as both upper and lower levels simultaneously increase the chance of rain. With a minimum of four planes, the technology enables the team to force clouds in the dry, volume them, drain them into the upper area and increase the quantity of rain. The technology had helped end the water problem in Thailand.

* * *

I learned this cloud-seeding here from Jack Hunter, who brought his Wayne Oquinn and Lynn President Ferdinand Marcos to Thailand to study the technology. Hunter is also credited with the SM, which was done using three Lycon 260 Turbo Commander for the task. He succeeded one of the PAF that crashed in Mindanao. Hunter was the PAF that was to send our photo Hunter learned the technique.

* * *

In 1986, the UNESCO was described by President Cory Aquino with the Philippine Normal College (PNC) to establish the Regional Training Center for Teacher Management (RETCM). In 1990, Aquino created the Regional Basic Foundation Programs with the optional assistance of Hunter and the RETCM and PNC among its members. The RETCM purchased three Cessna 421 B for rain-making and new PAF pilots and crew to the TA to train, but it also made the unwanted decision of keeping these planes, instead of running them over to the PAF. The fate of the planes down-sized and the RETCM had no more to fating private aircraft for outstanding operations. In the meantime, the PAF was left with one old one-and-a-half new planes. Perhaps it's time to start using this outmoded cloud-seeding technology.

* * *

Interesting news coming out of Cebu. Rep. Igay Augustin's committee chairs simultaneously call Representative Eric Singson to testify on the Jose Pidal and Abu Sayyaf controversy. Singson, a member of the anti-making team, and Congress must allocate enough funds to purchase new rain-making planes. But as important, the government should obtain information about the Thailand's rain-making technology and not have soon to anticipate on outmoded cloud-seeding method. Expose and find out. This technology breeds people to BT for this, or one could have terminated her debate of the drought to the economy.

A nonstory

TO GET PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPERS YOU NEED DEDICATION, persistence and the ability to take rejection. That has always been my dream. But apart from years of trying to come up with a story worth publishing, I have realized this much: I do not have any story worth writing.

I have tried writing about my life, that as I was entering the decades of my life. I realized that, in spite of my ability to endure decent one, my life is not really interesting.

I decided to make my life interesting. But then I realized that to make many dramatic changes. What I did not know was that in trying to make myself up life in pursuit of my desires, I would find some truths I would rather ignore.

Five years after I decided to change, the people I met in high school look at me for five minutes before they recognize me. The once-weight girl who liked to wear oversized clothes and thong slippers is gone. The girl who would rather let couple dead than wear heels and vain tops is now a regular in the malls. She wears heels and tops and shorts and the addiction of the heels powder and the smells.

After five years, "I didn't know you were ugly!" has taken a new and inspiring meaning for me. I have learned that how you look doesn't have much to do with how you feel. Or how you get to life. But still, when I see the teenagers and how you judge yourself from their smiles. That each, the beautiful ones and, lip gloss are not all that matter in life, but as the lot of teens puts it, "that is what it makes you feel beautiful."

The way I see it, as long as you do not forget the essential things in life, like values and love, there is nothing wrong with looking—and trying to be—as pretty as you can.

However, when I tried to write about these changes, I found them to be too common. After all, many girls have their own versions of the story about the ugly duckling.

So, I thought I should become somebody ridiculously successful. If I am to write about my life, I should be a philosopher, public speaker or a politician. Only then would I have the authority to write about my life. I found that I was never able to finish that project, for that would have been an insult to my friend Rod.

After I've seen nothing new different, I have moved back and forth from the world of Hillary Duff and Gossip magazine to that of Josh Groban and Andrews Eve. In trying to avoid being stereotyped as a nerd or as a plain teenager, I have become twice vulnerable things.

I had also improved what my mom should be as middle ground, that things should be either black or white. But after five years, I know that sometimes it is OK to be in between or to be the gray area. Being different is not the only way to stand out. Standing out is not about choosing black when everyone else wears white. It is about choosing what you stand for.

"Focus Big Rocks," not like all of your best friends. It is not about always keeping abreast of the latest fashion or getting the highest scores in your exams. What matters most is that you have the capacity to be comfortable in your own skin, to know what you want and be persistent over chasing regardless of how different it may be from the rest of the world.

Part when I tried to write about my own, I could not find the gritty area of life. I realized that the area was too much for my senses, word-by, sense geek vocabulary. So I thought that I should have an advocacy. Maybe I should support a certain cause or I could.

And so, in the same when I needed it, I ran and left to love with the Dove Self-Esteem campaign. I was swept away by that commercial and began writing my friends to join the wagon so that we can be a force for the self-esteem land. I said, myself, have as a good advocacy: enough young girls to feel good about their bodies and their lives. Not as young girls. Standards of what is good and beautiful have to evolve for girls capacity to feel as if young girl's spirit. In wonderful, that there is beauty in being real. Touch down that girls have the right to feel beautiful, but being beautiful does not preclude a woman of having a thin waist, fair skin, or nose-length. Truth: women should be proud of their curves, their flaws. Brown, and real women are important but beautiful in their imperfection. Real women commit mistakes. They can sometimes taste the wrong dress or be wrong party, or sometimes take them to "groups" for study. But real women are women who learn for their mistakes and who are brave enough to try again. So, as the Dove commercial says, touch girls to be true and to be among women they will be beautiful.

But when I tried to write about it, I realized I had nothing to write but phrases lifted from the song and the commercial. The discovery was so shocked for it as it is.

So, I thought I should write about other wonderful messages I have learned throughout my life. I recalled the lessons I got from my readers. I don't know why one has me the wrinkles things in the most unexpected time, but through the years, I have learned to stop complaining and begin being grateful for many things.

One of my all-time favorites was what my philosophy teacher told our class: "You can never taste the sweetness of life's sweet unless you taste the bitterness of life's bitter. Love you suffering." Well for Socrates my mentor. It is one of the things I still cry on when I feel sorry for myself. I have also truly defined, when sleepless nights and too much school work take their toll on me, when everything gets spazy, when the jumpsy takes me long to learn the sentence and I am on a hurry to reach home in record-setting.

I find it really somewhat of perspective. It's one lesson either so well that I can't help but smile when I'm in the middle of a sudden drama. I don't know if I have found some part of the answer or a happy life. A happy life is about not living the blunders of the past continue or future your present and the future. It is about refusing to let pain from further you. It is about having the courage to dream—to dream and to work to live—get pretty. It is about being true, and it is about knowing enough to submit that you are weak. It is about forgiving others as well as yourself.

I have yet found so write about the lessons I learned from my teachers. I ended up writing a farewell letter as a student who was leaving the university.

So what is this book to see be about? Nothing, except that I am finishing this another with chapter hours. After five years, I have learned to write my life story over the publishing. I have also learned that the world is full of stories that may not be good or pages but good for the heart. There are no set rules I seem to write.

Eleanor N. Balagtas, 20, completed the AB Political Science course at the Ateneo de Naga University.

Young Blood

Eleanor N. Balagtas

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Welcome contributions from the newspaper-writing and letter.—Ed.

The 'Louie' awards

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

I WAS GLAD TO ACCEPT AN INVITATION TO BE one of the presenters during the annual "Louie" awards of outstanding achievements in business and entrepreneurship, which I don't have enough information of the few honorable articles and plaques from 2000-2006, the evening was also a chance to reconnect myself on the boundless energy and enthusiasm of the awardees. Despite the early deadlines and hotel openings that had been a hallmark of the project it was so fascinating.

Named for Louie Nubla Perez, who helped his father in the early years of their business, and who died in a private plane, the awards honor the key words as adapted by a panel of editors and officers. Before this year's ceremony, entitled Inspiration, we were treated to a video presentation that described the hard times and the struggles that the "Louies" were handed on their rewards, evidently quite gathering. But this year the cast did the inspirations described to make villages dedicated, and so on were amazed at an evening that how the awardees had overcome the odds to succeed.

Beyond the

US military aid cut lauded

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

LETTERS

Trillanes has the mandate to be inside Congress

TRILLANES pushes his way through a crowd of supporters as he proclaims

Philippine eagle as 'tourist sight'?

'Eye for an eye' wrong strategy

Let's not weep over loss of RP basketball team

Antiterror law is self-executory

Applause in Congress, boos in streets

Across the NATION

US firms seek stop to labor attacks

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—AT LEAST EIGHT US apparel and retail companies have sent a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo, expressing their concern over the recent violent attacks on strikers in a Korean-owned company at the Carmelo Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

The letter—dated Aug. 3 and signed by the executives of Gap, Walmart, Adidas-Eagle Out-fitters, G&J Jeans, Apparel Group, Liz Claiborne, Philippine Tissues, VF Corp., and Puma—followed the alleged violent attacks of the police and security guards against the striking workers of Chong Won Fashion Inc. (now L Won Trading).

This was the second time that the US companies had appealed to the President to act on labor violence.

The first, which was on November 7, 2006, sparked the dismissals of the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce for the Arroyo to step up ethical lifestyle.

According to the Workers' Assistance Center, the strikers of Chong Won were violently attacked by armed and hooded-masked men on two succeeding periods—at 8:30 p.m. on June 14 and 3:30 a.m. on June 15.

In the letter furnished to the bosses, the US companies said they "expressed their concern about disturbing reports of violence and threats against human and labor rights protesters, labor leaders and workers."

They said they were also bothered by the participation of the municipal and CEPZ police in the attacks.

"It is imperative that companies doing business in the Philippines remain sensitive to the government's commitment to freedom of expression, freedom of association and the rule of law," the letter said.

Rev. Fr. Jose F. Dizon, executive director of the NPAC, said it was about time that the Arroyo administration seriously heed this call against the ongoing labor and human rights violations and finally enforce the will to resolve the attacks.

He said it had been a year since the first letter of these big US apparel companies had been sent and received by the President but "their call seemed to have fallen on deaf ears as human and labor rights violations continue to happen under this government."

The latest violent attack on the Chong Won strikers had been very traumatic for the workers, he said. "Until now, we are still helping some of these workers avail emotional help because of a post-traumatic syndrome (if ever) they have suffered."

He said many international human rights organizations, human rights supporters and advocates and even international bodies, including UN Secretary-Gen. Kofi Annan, had passed their indictments on the current human rights violations being committed with impunity in the country.

The signatories to the letter were Guy O. Bradford, vice president for corporate social responsibility and economic empowerment of the Asia Foundation; Eagle Outfitter, Inc.; Lauren Silverman, vice president for compliance and human rights of Jones Apparel Group; Daryl Rosen, vice president for business ethics and compliance of Liz Claiborne; Marcela Manubens, vice president for global human rights & social responsibility programs of Philippine Tissues; David Lincoln, senior director for global human rights compliance of Polo Ralph Lauren; Ron Mosby, director for social compliance of VF Corp., and Rajan Ramakrishnan, director for manufacturing, global procurement of Puma. Nikki Gutierrez-Gallejo, Inquirer Southern Luzon

WORKERS in Brgy. Buenavista, Bongabon, Nueva Ecija are pictured on this "normal level" of the reservoir at 575 meters. Despite the fact that the country is at the height of the typhoon season, the level of the dam is still at 560 meters. Binga is being pressured to release water to San Roque and later to Pangasinan to help in irrigating the parched land there.

Farmers assail DAR execs for agri land conversion

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

MANGALAGAE DAMPAWGA—SEVEN SUGAR land tenants here and the Kalipunan ng Mahayang Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon have accused Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman of conspiring with the DAR in placing 12.2 hectares here under the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program as early as 1998.

KMMGL chair Efren Clemente said Pangandaman has not yet acted on the appeal of barangay Sta. Monica farmers to reconsider his June 25, 2006 decision approving the land use conversion.

"We suspect that the secretary was swayed by a syndicate in the Department of Agrarian Reform," Clemente told the Inquirer, without disclosing details.

In the 14-page order, Pangandaman said the June 6, 2005 order of then DAR Central Luzon director Narciso Oreta that the property was covered by the CARP was "misplaced and erroneous."

"At present time, no notice of coverage has been received by the registered owners. Hence the subject property has not been under the coverage of CARP and the DAR has no jurisdiction over it. The opposition cannot be designated nor identified as farmer-beneficiaries for the simple reason that the said property has not yet been covered by CARP," Pangandaman said.

Oreta said in his order that municipal agrarian reform officer Visitacion Guevarra had considered the 12.1 ha for CARP coverage and the remaining 18 ha as retention area of the owners.

Victorian Rebadulla, whose father was the manager of the estate, said Guevarra visited a section of CARP coverage in the heart of the estate on April 30, 2006.

Oreta's order stated that the Bureau of Lands of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources approved on Dec. 17, 2002 the subdivision plans, which listed the names of the potential CARP beneficiaries.

Respondents said in his order that "agricultural production has diminished in the area" and that the property "serves as the natural expansion of a nearby residential commercial area."

DA says rice supply enough despite drought

PLARIDEL, BULACAN—AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap has assured the public that there is enough supply of rice despite destruction of palay farms in Central Luzon due to the shortage of irrigation water amid the dry spell.

"We are not yet importing rice today because the NFA (National Food Authority) has enough stocks until December. We will still see if rice importation will be needed," he said.

Palay farms in Central Luzon have been receiving less supply from the National Irrigation Administration, through the Angat dam, after the reservoir's level dropped due to the lack of rainfall.

Yap, who visited the province on Monday, said palay needs plenty of water to thrive and the absence of rain or irrigation water would destroy the crops.

Mariano Alvarez, NIA manager in Bulacan, said the province has 46,000 sacosa of irrigated rice stock and his office is expecting a shipment of 135,000 cavans through the Public Bay Freeport.

Rice enough

Alvarez said the shipment is part of the remaining 750,000 cavans allocated for Bulacan. He said the province has been allotted 1.5 million cavans this year.

"We are still running for rains today... we do not know if rains will come or not, whereas ask Pagasa (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), they could not directly say when will the rains come," Yap said.

Cloud seeding operations have been ongoing at the Angat watershed area in the past two weeks but rains falling on the reservoir and its surrounding have not improved the dam's level.

Water level at the dam was 170.7 meters on Monday, almost 30 meters below the rational level of 180 meters.

Monday's level was lower than the 172.14 meters and 172.26 meters recorded on July 30 and 31, respectively.

The National Water Resources Board last week said it has reduced to 25 cubic meters per second the normal 32 cubic meters per second release it was releasing to NIA for the irrigation needs of farmers in Bulacan and Pampanga.

Water reduction

Redeemer Cruiz, Department of Agriculture director in Central Luzon, said they feared that palay planted in 7,500 hectares of rice farms in Bulacan would be destroyed if rains would not return.

Bulacan has 93,000 ha irrigated rice lands and 20,000 ha rain fed rice farms.

Gloria Cortes, Bulacan agriculture official, said rains experienced in the province in the past few days were "superficial."

She said rice farms have would need three consecutive days of rainfall so farmers would save their crops.

The DA has started providing assistance to small farmers reeling from the adverse effects of the dry spell.

Yap earlier distributed to municipalities in Bicol for shallow tube wells and seeds as an immediate response to help reduce damages to farm and livestock production.

Those were given to various irrigators associations and farmers associations in the towns of Ibaan, Sto. Domingo, Magsaysay, San Vicente, Taysan, Tuy, Nasugbu, Calatagan in Batangas.

Long-term measures

The Bicol Region is one of the five regions suffering from the dry spell, along with Central and Southern Luzon, Rizal and Cagayan Valley.

The Philippine Carabao Center, Yap also distributed drugs and vaccines to combat big cholera, hemorrhagic septicaemia and others. Carmenita Reyes, Angelo de Cera and Jerome Aning in Manila

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MAKATI CAMPUS

RAWAL SETTING
A resident of New Corella tends to pigs in her pen in a setting all too familiar to other rural areas. The only difference is New Corella residents had been practicing sustainable agriculture methods that not only keep the cash register ringing but also protect the environment.

'Lechon' feast held in Bulacan to erase hog cholera stigma

CITY OF MALOLOS—OFFICIALS of the Department of Agriculture and the Bulacan government led a Lechon (roast pig) eating festival in the provincial capital on Monday to prove that pork from the province is safe in the wake of the hog cholera that struck local backyard hog breeders last month.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said the disease has been controlled and Bulacan may be considered hog cholera-free.

"The hog cholera is already controlled," he said.

Yap assured the public that meat inspection officials brought to the airport in Pinaklet were under the secretary was overseeing dead-sealing operations.

Yap said the disease, which spared commercial farms in the province, has killed about 0.5 per cent of the swine than a million pigs raised in Bulacan.

He said the mortality rate from the disease was "very very low."

Dr. Ramon Mendiola, chief of the regulatory division of the regional DA, said that as of July 27, the joint virus that caused the disease had killed at least 540 (10 per cent) of the 5,400 affected swine in Bulacan and Pampanga.

Provincial veterinarians said the virus spread to 3,150 pigs in 20 towns in Bulacan and 2,250 pigs in 17 towns and the City of San Fernando in Pampanga. DA reports showed.

Bulacan Gov. Josefina Mendoza, officials of the DA and provincial government and hog raisers, partook of at least 300 lechon served for the festival.

Officials said the pigs used in the festival came from backyard farms in Bulacan.

Mendoza said the provincial government had spent more than P500,000 to buy vaccines and disinfectant for backyard farms to prevent the spread of the disease.

Mendoza said the dead animals' parts have been set up around Bulacan to stop the transport of infected animals.

Felipe Bautista, provincial veterinarian, said the vaccines have been distributed to different municipal and city agricultural offices. Gerrado Reyes, Inquirer C. Lanot

Fear of mining contamination hounds villagers

IBOLOG CITY—THE COLLAPSE of a wall of the tailings pond in an open-cut gold mine in the village of Candaman in Sinora, Zamboanga del Norte, has caused alarm among residents in nearby towns and compelled the Sangguniang Bayan officials to conduct a "fact-finding inquiry" on possible dangers of contamination.

"We should know whether the claim of TVI Resource Development Philippines that the mine is safe is true or not," Board Member Gabriel Adlawan said in a privilege speech at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, now.

Adlawan said Fr. Edgar Aguas, Siocon parish priest, confirmed to him the collapse of the wall of a tailings pond at the mine site because of the heavy rains.

Aguas was also quoted as saying that tracks of gravel were taken from nearby Pinawatak River to rebuild the collapsed part of the tailings pond.

Denial

Adlawan said Aguas had claimed that residents were misinformed about the color of the reddish water coming from the tailings pond through a creek and to the Pinawak River as that such as Siocon Bay, about 24 km from the mine site.

But Raymund Acejadas, TVI Pebble Affairs Officer, said there was nothing to be alarmed of because the reported collapse of their tailings pond is not true.

Acejadas said "heavy rains washed out the clay soil on which (a) concrete wall will be constructed, that's what happened, and that the rubble was never supposed to be the wall."

Extraction

He explained that the mine has two main tailings pond, the first is a "gypsum dam" where wastes for the extraction of gold and silver will be deposited.

The second, which is still under construction, is the "reclaim dam" that will be used for the extraction of copper, and zinc.

Dewatering

"What is good is that there will be no chemicals that will be dumped in the sulphide dam," Acejadas said.

But Adlawan said "dewatering" reports on the safety of the TVI created more potential of...

"Although certified by the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) to be safe, residents fear that it (gypsum dam) has never undergo to undisclosed tests intended to be used during unshored heavy rains," The board member said.

This was strongly denied by Acejadas.

"How could we allow excess water when the company is getting water from the same source that others claim to have been contaminated," he said.

Sacred mountain

Adlawan said that they still need to conduct a "legislative inquiry" to determine whether or not the risk of chemical contamination exists.

He said that the inquiry "will focus mainly on the allegation that the tailings pond at the mine site collapsed."

The Canadian owned TVI started its full operations in July 2004 on a 64-hectare Canadian. Had once claimed by Subanen lumad as "sacred."

Although a group of Subanens, called Siocon Subanen Association Inc., has given consent to the mining operations, another group of Subanens with the same name has supported by the Catholic Church and environmentalists have continued opposing TVI.

Ariel Lopez, Inquirer Mindanao

Jailed terror suspect wrong guy, says family

GAMARIN, SOUTH COTABATO— The family of a man from Barangay Gadsi here said he was mistaken for Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Commander Kato Mamalog, suspect in the Jan. 10 bombing in Kidapawan City.

Mister Mastura, father of now jailed Sayre Mastura, 25, said his family merely wanted his son freed as he is not Mamalog, and that they are not connected in any manner that the government persuaded under Human Security act to say enough information and individual charged with terrorism.

Insp. Cyprian Cadeco, Cotabato police chief, said the detained man's brothers, Kemalin, 43, reported that in the afternoon of Jan. 11, hours after the bombing charged by unidentified men who ran from where he stood at the town's market.

Kemalin Datu Ibn Dimbo on his disappearance, the Cotabato police station had records of suspected bomber against Mastura of Mamalog.

The Mastura said they need a lawyer's service to represent them with their legal pleadings at the Provincial Prosecutor's Office.

Christina and Mastura relatives of Barangay Gadsi had signed affidavits saying Mastura and Commander Kato are "two different persons."

The village chair, not all members of Barangay Gadsi, have also certified that Mastura is known to them and that he never had any criminal record.

A second "MEMO of International Persons" on Mastura's identity was jointly issued by neighbors Victoria Dagpil and Jose Antonio, both Christians, saying they know the detainee, an underfed man, who had no prior record of delinquency in their community.

The family legal service Mastura has had, so far, in the preparation of a document filed "Submission of Affidavit of Identity" by state lawyer Odaniel Dolo of the Public Attorneys' Office (PAO), according to his colleagues.

North Cotabato Mon Gov. Emmanuel Pifol told the Inquirer that he had Mastura's family informed that the provincial government would be helping him to his legal battle.

"I have the impression that he did not behave like a real suspect...is shown by his refusal to join the protesters spirited out by the MILF) in the last February, pulled, why might be helping him secure legal assistance," Pifol said.

Pifol was referring to the last Feb. 2 jailbreak in the Cotabato Provincial Jail, in which 48 detainees, including some suspects, were spirited out by roving armed men, believed to be MILF members.

Jacob B. Mendoza, Inquirer Mindanao

CITYFIRST Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor leads relatives of terrorist activities in ceremonies in support of the Human Security Act as a hostage stand for the victims in Metro Manila. INQUIRER

Cops remove tollgate of landowner in Hinobaan

By Carla P Gentes
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE POLICE removed a tollgate put up by a landowner in Hinobaan town and arrested six persons collecting toll from motorists Saturday.

Landowner Magellan Sarmiento said he put up the tollgate in Barangay Culipapa because the Department of Public Works has not paid him for land that was used as a portion of the highway.

Sarmiento said he ran a spite to set up a tollgate on his private property. He also claimed as illegal the seizure of an excavator under the Saturday afternoon by the Hinobaan police led by their chief, Insp. Mares Magnaye. Sarmiento said he will file a case to collect toll from passing motorists.

Sarmiento, a former president of the Association of Barangay Captains of Hinobaan, said he had his family have prepared charges of illegal detention and damage to property against the police.

Magnaye, on the other hand, said the police would file charges against Sarmiento, as policemen had been detained by the men who were arrested, and another who escaped, for violation of Presidential Decree 17 Section 23 for unlawful closure of highways without a court order to collect toll.

He also contended that Sarmiento's men were giving toll receipts not recognized by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Landowner Joaquin Bernas, who is also demanding payment from the DPWH for the use of his land for the highway, insisted that PD 17 does not apply to private property.

"What was done to Sarmiento illegal," Bernas said.

Gov's plea to stop mining goes unheeded

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA —The country's environment official ignored the plea of Gov. Luisa Cuaresma to deny any application for an exploration permit on an upland village in Quirino town his fund by Oath Development.

Horacio Ramos, director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), approved on Thursday the renewal of the permit of Philex Exploration Project of Benguet Corp. (BC), an English firm, despite Cuaresma's request that any application for a mining permit in Runtum Mountain be "outrightly denied."

In her July 2 letter, Cuaresma told then Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes that instead of pushing mining, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources should first assess the ecological impact of the area and revoke the exploration permit given to them.

Jessyel Mangansag, MGB director for Cagayan Valley, said Ramos' approval came when Reyes was the chairman on July 30, a day before the secretary left office.

Reyes, who was named secretary of the Department of Energy was replaced by former Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Mangansag denied that Cuaresma's plea was ignored by MGB in considering the renewal of Philex's exploration permit.

"Management agency may have considered also the mandate (supposing wrong) by the more than 1,000 people from Runtum," he said.

In a statement issued by the company last week, Jonathon Brandenmark, Philex third executive officer, confirmed the renewal of the exploration permit.

The permit covering about 3,000 hectares in Barangay Runtum was first issued to Toronto Mining Corp. in 2000 and was transferred to FCF Mining Corp. on Jan. 22, 2006.

In February 2005, FCF Mining signed a deal to allow Philex to exploit and develop the Runtum project.

The original permit was renewed in 2005, and expired on July 21, 2007, documents showed.

In her letter, Cuaresma said she was alarmed by the exploration activities being conducted by Philex in Runtum, forcing a repeal of the "massive development" wrought by Typhoons Pepeng and Quiriono last year.

At least 13 people were killed when flash floods ravaged the village on Typhoon Pepeng last October, which submerged about 70 houses in the village center.

"I am convinced that the conduct of any mining activity in the area will enhance the probability of another massive landslide," Cuaresma said.

She also requested to reserve the rigorous opposition to the conduct of any mining activity in Quirino town." Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Heavy rains give farmers hope

From page A1

brought some relief to a population hungry for rain in the face of a worst crisis.

"Thank God for the rain," a graduate student working at the Department of Psychology in UP Diliman, Quezon City, said in a text, summing up the general glee that greeted the downpour.

Elsewhere in Quezon City, middle-level government officers meeting at the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) office to plot their next move on how the water crisis in the Metro will be solved.

"When it started to rain, everyone in the room was thrilled," Leslie Dizon, supervising researcher-analyst of the National Irrigation Administration, said in a phone interview.

Dizon, NWRB's unit on impacting a fresh cutback in the supply of raw water from August dues to residents in Metro Manila from 40 cubic meters/second to 39, and to farms in Bulacan and Pampanga from 23 cu. m/s to 12 cu. m. starting Aug. 15.

Choking

The rain was induced by storm "Chedeng," which crossed the Philippine area of responsibility at around 10 p.m. Sunday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

Downpours were also experienced in some parts of Bulacan.

From early yesterday's rains, Lt. Umar Bajo Thomas Dumpit Jr. said he would like a moratorium seeking to grant President Macapagal-Arroyo emergency powers to address the lack of rain and its effect on agriculture.

Senate Sunday the storm has influenced the southwest monsoon, dubbed "habagat," originating over the Visayas and Mindanao. It's expected to trigger rainover the western section of Luzon in the next two to three days.

"That's the effect of the monsoon rain," Nilo Dizon, Pagasa weather forecaster for operations, said of the sudden downpour in Metro Manila.

Prayers

In the coming days, rain is expected in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, Cavite, Batangas and Metro Manila, among other western parts of Luzon.

"Prayer help," Ponce said in an interview.

It was only the third storm to enter the country's area of responsibility after "Isang" in late May and "Helong" in the coastal work of July Normally, an average of eight storms hit the country by the end of July.

As of 10 a.m. yesterday, the storm, with sustained winds of 95 kph and gustiness of 120 kph, was 670 km east of Batanes. It was moving west northwest toward Taiwan at a speed of 20 kph.

It's forecast to be 470 km east northeast of Basco, Batanes this morning; 120 km south southwest of Taipei tomorrow morning, and 360 km west northwest of Taipei on Thursday night.

Temporary relief

The storm, however, appeared to bring only temporary relief to Metro Manila, Regions 1, 2, 3 and the Cordillera Administrative Region (but have been hit by dry spell for two consecutive years.

The disturbances would not directly hit any part of the land.

"If the storm moves slowly, the southwest monsoon will bring more rains. But if it continues to be fast, the what's happening now is it will trigger more rains," Pagasa said.

The rain induced by the storm would bring minimal rain to Angat Dam, whose water supply dipped to 179.7 meters above sea level as of yesterday, way below its critical level of 180 m, he said.

The reservoir supplies water to 12 million residents in the Metro Manila and at least 10,000 hectares of farmland in Central Luzon. Because of its critically low supply, officials of the MWSS had proposed months ago cutback in the allocation for residents and farmers.

The water levels in other major dams in Luzon, such as Magat in Isabela, Pantabangan in Nueva Ecija and San Roque in Pangasinan, have also dropped to below critical levels because of inadequate rain for two months.

"It will only bring minimal rain(fall) in Angat dam. It's in Nueva Ecija and San Roque is the essential rainfall in San Roque dam," Ponce said.

A Pagasa climatologist said that some 400 mm of rainfall triggered by a typhoon that would directly hit the reservoir would bring the water level back to normal.

"It turned out to be just a temporary relief," said Prisco of NIA, who met with officers at the NWRB, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, National Power Corp. and the two water concessionaires, to map out fresh action plans vis-à-vis the water crisis.

Rains in Baguio not enough

Baguio experienced strong rains on Sunday but it amounted to only 35.1 millimeters of rainfall, when it is daily average for August should fall 38 mm, said Joseph Rice, Pagasa chief in the city.

Pagasa normally records an average of 900 mm of rain in August, Rice said, but the accumulated rainfall in the monsoon rainfall since Aug. 1 had been only 26 mm, "which is a far cry from what's rain last year."

Cesar Rodriguez, Cordillera director of the Department of Agriculture, said the dryness might was counting on rains to replenish the organic water shorts, which feed rivers that irrigate farmlands in Pangasinan, La Union and parts of Ilocos.

The rains, so far, have not been enough, he said. Despite the rains farmers have managed to withstand the dry spell, he said.

In Pangasinan, farmers in Calasiao town said their palay could not be saved despite the rains.

"The rain is useless. The soil has hardened so much that the palay seedlings could not flourish as they should have," said farmer Rolando Dinguinia, 60.

Farms abandoned

Dinguinia and Edgardo Malingding, 44, are tenants tilling one lot and almost four ha, respectively, in Barangay Bued, Calasiao.

They have abandoned their farms as they are dismayed every time they see the stunted seedlings.

"Maybe we will harvest only 40 percent of what we should harvest. It will not be enough to pay for the inputs like seedlings and fertilizer. Even if we harvest 50 percent, it will still not be enough," Dinguinia said.

The farmers said that too much rain was better than drought because palay can survive being submerged for three days.

A report of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council in Pangasinan showed that 91,319.71 hectares or 51.29 percent of the province's rice area were hit by the dry spell.

But reports from the provincial agriculturist said more farms in the different towns of Pangasinan had been planted with rice.

"If the rains will continue in the next seven days, then that's it, our farms are saved," said Nestor Bataña, the program director of the provincial government.

As of Monday, only 18.71 percent of the province's rice fields had not been planted, down from 78 percent at the start of the planting season in May.

Many farmers, especially in rain-fed areas, have begun planting "even Saturday," he said.

To date, only about 33 percent of Pangasinan's rain-fed farms located mostly in western Pangasinan had not been planted, while about 18 percent of the irrigated areas in the eastern part of the province remained unplanted.

Bataña said Ian Roque (Nueva Ecija) Corp., which operates the San Roque multipurpose dam in San Manuel town, had restricted to release water for irrigation for 15 days since Aug. 2.

He said with the rainfall, the province's average annual palay yield of 2 million metric tons might no longer be reduced.

Pangasinan produces 60 percent of the total rice production in the Ilocos region.

But he said that DSCC in considering the declaration of state of calamity is achieved reason.

In Nueva Ecija, intermittent rains from Saturday to Monday helped to relieving palay plants but is about 18,000 ha of unfilled areas in Nueva Ecija, according to Gerardo Ramos, provincial agriculturist.

But Ramos said the rains were not enough for the cultivation of almost 45,000 ha that had already seedlings in the seedbeds.

"The farmers really need very, very heavy rains now in order for them to plant their overgrown rice seedlings," Ramos said.

Ramos said the rains have increased the water level in the province's dams in Isabela.

He said the province still need about 9374 million in more production losses the past two months. *Reports from Rolando Rebolo-Pineches, Gaffrow Gardenas, Filomeno Hoopa Jr. and Vincent Calderon, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Anselmo Roque and Russell Molabo, Inquirer Central Luzon; and Norman Bordadora in Manila*

Pacquiao conqueror boxers' friend

From page A1

ner Castrodes is showing the ears he received in victory.

The South Cotabato lawmaker has filed a bill in the House of Representatives that would benefit "Sherman" when his grants to boxing are over.

House Bill No. 2376 seeks to grant a lifetime pension to Sherman, the former Olympic world champion since they reach the age of 50. It would also benefit ex-pugilists who had been incapacitated during their boxing career.

Pacquiao, who has earned millions of dollars with his fists while bringing honor to the country may not need that kind of money but the bill could help ex-champions living impoverished lives...like Junior world junior lightweight king Rolando Navarrete.

"Many boxers struggle financially when their careers are over," said Castrodes. "That is the woe of many past champions."

Advice to Pacquiao

Castrodes defeated the immensely popular Pacquiao in the race for the congressional seat of the first district of South Cotabato.

Pacquiao, arguably the most successful Filipino to ever step into the ring, has received accolades from supporters on the need for him to spend his career earnings wisely.

Fans apparently don't want

CUSTODIO

PACQUIAO

NAVARRETE

their idol in the way of many boxers who ended up hounded by financial troubles after hanging up their gloves.

In a statement, Castrodes said she was proud of Pacquiao who "elevates single-handedly" restored the Philippines in the international boxing arena, deservedly earning him rich endorsers and endorsements."

"Champions are champions and they deserve better than a mere pat on the back of the shoulders of his countrymen," she said. "They go to side the ring armed with the thought that what they do in the ring are only in their lives, it's fair to what will the consequences, as well."

Despite his popularity and the title "People's Champion" bestowed on him by the progressive Sky Magazine, Pacquiao holds no full-fledged world championship belt.

The only two Filipino world champions at present are Nonito Donaire, the International Boxing Federation and International Boxing Organization flyweight champ, and Donnie Nietes, the IBF mini-flyweight king.

At the polls, Pacquiao led by Castrodes in Region 12 stronghold of the powerful Aquino political clan.

Wheels of fortune

Senatorial is among more than 100 on known who have been linked to Bacolod politics in a bizarre trial. Intel set up with the help of donations from sports interests.

Since his colorful ring career ended, Mercedes has had brushes with the law, including arresting time in Bacolod prison for rape. The former "Bad Boy from Dadiangas" was once reported to be working as a fish vendor.

Hiroshima survivors speak out in US TV docu

From page A1

of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" on Monday, exactly 62 years after the United States detonated the first ever nuclear bomb over Hiroshima. A second atomic bomb was dropped three days later over Nagasaki. It ended World War II.

Why is the issue finally right?

"History is always worth recording and if there is a moment in history that hasn't been recorded and you're in a place where you have the resources, then you should," said Sheila Nevins, head of HBO's documentary unit. She hopes the TV documentary becomes a document of record that will be shown in schools.

The unbelievable barrage of cities reduced to rubble and grotesquely deformed survivors has received relatively little attention because...unlike the well-recorded Holocaust—this was something done by Americans, Nevins said.

Home Box Office and Okazaki also felt the same urgency expressed by "The Greatest Generation" author Tom Brokaw and Ken Burns, maker of the Public Broadcasting Service's epic series on World War II coming this fall. People who fought and survived World War II are dying quickly now, and soon there will be no more eyewitnesses.

14 survivors

The documentary being shown on the cable television station is built on stories told by 14 survivors, with children's pictures depicting the bombing and footage of the injured that Okazaki found in the public archives of Japan.

Okazaki interviewed American crew members who dropped the bombs and wondered whether they would escape before their planes were engulfed in the mushroom cloud.

The project dated back to the early 1990s, when Okazaki agreed to accompany his sister to a San Francisco meeting of hibakusha (what he is called people who survived the atomic bombings).

She dropped the class, but he went to the meeting anyway. At the end of the meeting, one man stood up and said that everyone there agreed Okazaki should make a film about their stories (Okazaki says their hands). They all did and named to him.

He made a short film and sold out that showed his interest in the era, including the Oscar-winning "Days of Waiting," about survivor of the days when Americans held in custody with Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Okazaki wanted to make a comprehensive documentary about the bombings, but through the footage and began doing it for HBO in the mid-1990s.

But the project fell through, with the filmmaker believing HBO didn't want to risk angering World War II veterans. So he instead made a more personal film, "The Rhythmaster's Club," and figured his dream was dead.

That is when Okazaki heard from Nevins.

"I was shocked when they called me and they wanted to do this film and when they described it, I realized it was the film I had wanted to do for 15 years," he said.

Debate continues

When he attended a festival of bombing-related films in the 1980s, Okazaki was struck by how little survivors were heard from. People had an aversion: it was much easier to debate whether dropping bombs that currently killed more than 200,000 people was right or wrong.

That debate continues today. Many believe that a potential US invasion would have killed many more people if the Japanese had not been disabled by the bombs (see sidebar). Even think Japan's war effort was near an end anyway, and that the bombs were partly meant to intimidate Russia.

Historian Taichi Sakaiya, author of the book that dropped the Hiroshima bomb, is among those who believe it was necessary to end the war. He saw Okazaki's film and did not mean overwhelmed.

"The story about the survivors of the bombs has been told many times," Van Kirk, 86, told The Associated Press. "It doesn't change. And this is just another story about survivors. I don't think from will be much reaction to it at all."

There were no Japanese protests. Seems a curious about how the documentary will be received other what the thought was a strangely dry-eyed reception at a Sundance Film Festival screening. "It was very quiet," Okazaki recalled. "It wasn't well-received-nonetheless, she said.

Taking no sides

Other than documenting the horrors of war, the film carefully takes no sides on the morality of dropping the bomb. Okazaki even refuses, to an interview, to say how he personally feels about it.

"I do have strong opinions and something about it," he said. "But I have a stronger motivation to get these stories out. These was this enmity space on the shelves under it."

That is not entirely true. The 1970s film "Hiroshima Mon Amour" contained brief documentary footage. The 1989 Japanese film "Rainy after Black Rain" was about the aftermath. Reporter John Hersey's book "Hiroshima" has received wide circulation.

Something Okazaki found surprising—and a barrier to his research—was the lingering stigma faced by bomb survivors in Japan. Perhaps it is because they resisted Japanese of a time they wanted to forget, or it was because fully explained by them.

When he sought to interview the "Hiroshima Maidens," girls who came to the United States in the 1950s for surgery on disfigurements, the only one who would talk was a woman who now lives in Germany.

Okazaki also found a plaque where the Nagasaki bomb detonated that said everyone within a one-kilometer area was killed instantly—except an 8-year-old girl who had fallen asleep in a bomb shelter.

He tracked her down and she refused a meeting.

"Her husband only knew that she was a survivor and she felt that finding in the film would hurt her husband's memory and her children's job opportunities," he said. "So the story will never be told."

IN THE KNOW

'Little Boy,' 'Fat Man' left 400,000 dead

MONDAY MARKS THE 62ND anniversary of the deaths of hundreds of thousands in Japan. Following are some facts about the bombing of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, 1945, bringing World War II to an end.

HIROSHIMA: At 8:15 a.m. on Aug. 6, 1945, an American B-29 Superfortress bomber Enola Gay dropped a 10,000-pound uranium 235 bomb on Hiroshima, instantly killing about 70,000 people, by the end of 1945, the number of dead had reached about 140,000 out of an estimated population of 350,000. (Source: Wikipedia)

The bomb, nicknamed "Little Boy," exploded about 600 meters above the center of the city, setting off a surge of heat reaching 4,000 degrees Celsius (7,200 Fahrenheit) across a radius of about 2 km.

NAGASAKI: Three days later, at 11:02 a.m. on Aug. 9, 1945, the United States dropped a 10,000-pound plutonium bomb on Nagasaki. It exploded about 500 meters above the ground, instantly killing about 27,000 of the city's estimated population of 200,000. By the end of 1945, the number of dead had reached about 70,000. (Source: Wikipedia)

TOTAL KILLED: Japan has acknowledged that the total number of victims who died of radiation illness and related deaths reached 253,000 in Hiroshima and 145,324 in Nagasaki. Last year, the city of Hiroshima added for the first time the words "Many forgiveness" to the bridge of the victims' memorial stone in a ceremony at the cenotaph at the Peace Memorial Park. Reuters

NEWS

Reusable bags catching on with consumers

By Tjhe Iguerta

IF YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED IT YET, REUSABLE bags are making a comeback—not only in supermarkets, but in bookstores and other shops.

The Second Bookshop, put up by journalists on Scout Castor Street near busy Tomas Morato Avenue in Quezon City, has been offering cloth tote bags at P125 apiece to customers who don't want to use plastic.

"Ten of every 15 of our customers refuse plastic bags. They'd rather carry the books in their own bags. For those who don't have bags, we offer the cloth bags. It's much better than (using) plastic bags," says staffer Sassalie "Sasing" Lanuza.

She is thrilled when she sees customers walk into the bookshop, hugging the same cloth bag, which they call the Inquirer bag because it bears the Hollywood actors' likeness.

The Second Bookshop is owned by journalists Carlos Conde, Inday Espina-Varona, May Rodriguez, Rowena Paraan and Bernadette Sembrano. It offers new and previously owned books on literature, journalism, politics, history, art, music, health and erotica, among other topics.

Too much plastic

Lanuza, 21, can't forget the day floodwaters and plastic bags swept into the bookshop after a heavy downpour years ago.

"There's just too much plastic around. They clog the canals and waterways," she says.

If she had her way, she would phase out plastic bags and go cloth bag all the way. Cloth bags, however, are more costly to purchase.

Fortunately, there is a growing consciousness among entrepreneurs of the need to go green and to consolidate less in the garbage problem in the metropolis, and in the larger context, in the warming of the climate.

Balik-'tuyong'

"Compared with two or three years ago, public awareness (on reusable bags) is more heightened now," says Gigie Cruz, a member of EcoWaste Coalition.

Cruz herself has noticed a sea change in the attitude of supermarket staff toward reusable bags.

There have been moves in the past to promote reusable bags in supermarkets and groceries, but these eventually sputtered partly because of the public's lack of enthusiasm.

Now environmental groups,

A BOUND Bookshop customer is elated with her Audrey Hepburn cloth bag. ALEX BADAYOS

including EcoWaste, are reviving the "balik-tuyong campaign," a move to encourage people to go back to the tradition of bringing their own bags when they go to market.

"We believe that single-use disposal plastic bags are big contributors to our garbage problem," Cruz says.

SM, Rustan's go reusable

Major stores and fabricators in Metro Manila like the Pasig, Marikina and Valenzuela rivers have been clogged with mixed waste, mostly plastic, according to the EcoWaste Coalition.

In the disaster survey conducted by EcoWaste Coalition and Greenpeace of Manila Bay in 2006, 75 percent of the garbage collected was plastic. Of this, 51 percent were single-use disposable plastic bags.

Over the past several months, big-name supermarkets have been aggressively promoting the use of reusable bags with their customers.

SM hypermarket, for instance, came out with its own green bags, giving them away for free to customers who buy P500 worth of Unilever products.

Rustan's Supermarket followed suit, but this time it sold reusable bags to customers, according to EcoWaste Coalition.

Surprised by initiative

The EcoWaste Coalition and other green groups met with the Philippine Retailers Association two years ago to broach the idea of giving away green bags to their customers, according to Cruz.

But the businessmen were worried about added costs, store shoplifting incidents and "stress points" for their advertisements, she says.

"That's why we were surprised by the recent initiative," Cruz says in an interview at the EcoWaste office, referring to the SM launch of its green bag made of polypropylene.

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HERE COMES THE RAIN
Children on their way to school in Quezon City yesterday were not ready for the downpour, making do with flimsy bamboo (in pictures) shams from the rain.

Muntinlupa City in state of calamity

₱85M for City Hall rehab–GMA

By Julie M. Aurelio

A STATE OF CALAMITY HAS BEEN DECLARED IN Muntinlupa City as a result of a three-hour fire that destroyed City Hall and more than P100 million in property on Friday.

Following the approval yesterday of a city council declaration, Mayor Aldrin Jan Pedro announced plans to rehabilitate City Hall.

"My plan to do it in 45 days, manage. The city government still has more than 300 people who will work in three shifts to restore City Hall," the mayor said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, accompanied by Vice President Noli de Castro, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando inspected the site yesterday morning.

In a meeting with city officials, she President pledged P50 million for the equipment and P50 million for the building's rehabilitation.

Muntinlupa City Rep. Nuffy Marcos also pledged a portion of his pork barrel for the rebuilding of the building.

"I will help in the rebuilding. But I won't give a figure as of now," said Marcos, who ran under the opposition slate with San Pedro in the May elections.

He said he is responsible for the fire was intentional as there were reasons of threats to harm down the city's public market son.

"If anything, this will be a relief for San Pedro's administration this will strengthen him," Marcos added.

San Pedro said the total rehabilitation cost would be less than P100 million.

He added that the rehabilitated City Hall would have more exits, a fire alarm system and a fire-hydrant nearby.

The three-hour fire destroyed City Hall and the nearby police station, leaving only two offices on the ground floor unscathed.

Officers in the more than 50-year-old building were temporarily transferred to the nearby People's Center and the Arca Building, also in the City Hall compound.

Despite the rehabilitation plans, San Pedro said construction of the new City Hall in Brgy. Alabang in front of the Ospital ng Muntinlupa would continue. Though there would be a little delay because of the fire.

"The new City Hall will probably take at least two years to build at a cost of P1 billion," the mayor said.

Meanwhile, city fire marshal Insp. Jose Jimbo said they were not discounting the possibility of arson in Friday's fire.

He said they had not for them tal analysis the arson, debris and remaining wiring in the building.

Jimbo said results of their investigation would be released next week.

HOW TO SET UP AND MANAGE AN NGO OR FOUNDATION SEMINAR, AUG. 29, 2007. Topics: Getting organized; Project cycle overview: planning, managing, implementation, monitoring, evaluation & reporting, financial management; Sourcing funding; Best practices & techniques; Sustainability. Venue: Richville Hotel, 286 EDSA, Mandaluyong City. 1-9 PM. To register, call Trillium Knowledge Center Publishing: 531-4894, 570-9655, 0919-229-8777; 0918-229-8780, 0915-780-4370 or email: trillium@pldtdsl.net or tkcp_ph@yahoo.com. Limited seats only. Register Now!

Former ambassador charged with estafa, falsification of docus

By Julie M. Aurelio

NOONA

A FORMER ASEAN ambassador to Spain has been charged with estafa and falsification of public documents for allegedly taking from his sister-in-law more than P1 million in cash.

Assistant City Prosecutor Remy Salazar recommended a bail of P40,000 for the charge of estafa, and P12,000 for falsification of public documents.

In her complaint filed in the Makati City Prosecutor's Office, Luisa Rocha alleged that her brother-in-law Juan Jose Rocha refused to hand over more than P1 million in her, representing her share in the sale of a 1999 Jaguar owned by her late husband. The money can was reportedly sold to Jaguar Cars Inc. for P1,750,000. Salazar said he found probable cause to charge Rocha with estafa.

Salazar said there was also probable cause to charge Rocha with falsifying public documents when he made a false narration of facts in the deed of absolute sale covering the car. The former ambassador is currently chief, presidential chief executive officer of the international shipping and manning corporation C. F. Sharp Holdings Inc.

Salazar said that when the car was sold, Rocha did not mention that his half brother who owned the car, Arturo Rocha, had died. Luisa said the former ambassador was named executor of her husband's last will and testament. But Rocha reportedly did not present the will for probate. The envoy also did not file a petition in court to liquidate the conjugal partnership and determine the estate taxes.

The ambassador, for his counter affidavit, said he had a power of attorney from Arturo and had full authority to sell the car. Proceeds of the sale, reportedly counted through C. F. Sharp Companies, paid for the expenses of Arturo's properties and Luisa's personal needs.

Businesswoman ordered to pay ₱2M in SSS dues

By Margaux C. Grio

A QUEZON CITY JUDGE ordered yesterday a businesswoman to pay more than P2 million in delinquency contributions to the Social Security System after finding her guilty of violating the social security law.

QC Regional Trial Court Branch 77 Judge Vicente Ruelo also sentenced Candelaria Alapag to six years and one day to seven and to pay a fine of P20,000.

The court found that Alapag, owner of C.L. Alapag Trading at No. 52 San Joaquin St., Marikina City, "willfully, unlawfully and feloniously" failed to remit Social Security System, Medicare and Employees Compensation (EC) contributions.

Maricris Verallion, SSS account officer, testified that Alapag had the obligation to deduct the SSS contributions of her 11 employees and remit them to the SSS office on East Avenue, Quezon City.

In Verallion's assessment, the delinquency from July 1997 to May 2000 amounted to P2,119,204.65, inclusive of penalties.

Alapag, who pleaded not guilty, did not appear to present evidence during the hearings on April 16 to 18 and June 27.

"The existence for the presecution clearly shows that the accused is an SSS registered employer; that she was delinquent in the remittance of the contributions she is mandated to pay to the SSS; and that her outstanding delinquency from July 1992 to May 2000, in excess of the 3 percent penalties, totaled P2,119,204.65," Ruelo said in his decision.

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STARCROSSOVER

A derelict of society at the NBI

AIR FORCE CAPT. FERDINAND Lirong, a helicopter pilot of the Special Operations Group based in Iloilo, said in a sworn statement that he was in constant communication with ground troops during the ambush of Marines in Basilan.

Lirong's affidavit belies claims by military higher-ups that there was faulty communication between the helicopter and the troops under its cover.

Now, the question is why didn't Lirong's chopper fire at the attackers below?

If Lirong is installed in Manila to testify, a can of worms will be opened about the military's greatest humiliation in recent years.

* * *

I fully agree with fellow columnist Ramon J. Farolan who said in yesterday's issue of the Inquirer that the highest ups in the Armed Forces should take responsibility for the Basilan fiasco.

Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, AFP chief of staff; Lt. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, Western Mindanao Command chief; and Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga, Marine commandant should resign.

But the problem is some people have no sense of shame.

* * *

The incompetence of people at the top in the military causes junior officers to be slaughtered in the field, as the Basilan fiasco has shown.

Likewise, corruption in the higher echelons at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) makes for some corrupt agents at the bottom rung of the police law enforcement agency.

NBI top and middle level executives don't like to be ordered around by Reynaldo Esmeralda, deputy director for regional services.

These NBI top honchos say Esmeralda doesn't have the moral authority to lead them since he was once a derelict of society.

Esmeralda shot that on Sept. 8, 1995, NBI Director Epimaco Velasco dismissed him. Special Agent Esmeralda from the service for grave misconduct.

Esmeralda was allegedly supplying guns to a hitman for recognition and car theft syndicate led by Arturo Angeles.

After an exhaustive investigation by his peers, Esmeralda was also found to have been involved in the killing of two members of Angeles's gang for avenging some of the guns he illegally lent the group.

Esmeralda, however, was acquitted by the courts. He used his acquittal as basis for his reinstatement.

"Mr. Valte, he's at it again...believe me, you're our only hope in exposing Esmeralda," said an NBI official.

Esmeralda allegedly got his position because of his closeness to a prominent public figure.

More on Esmeralda in subsequent columns.

* * *

The appointment of Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Ruben Reyes to the Supreme Court recently was not a loss to some functionaries at the appellate court.

"It's good riddance for us, Mon," said an appeal court employee.

Reyes, he said, didn't think of the welfare of the small employees at the court, but of his own and his daughter's.

Last Christmas, Reyes allegedly used up all the money intended for bonuses of court employees to buy new service cars for his fellow justices, according to the CA employee.

Why did Presiding Justice Reyes do that? Because he was allegedly courting subordinate justices on they would agree to the appointment of his daughter as division clerk of court in the appeals court.

She got the position last January.

* * *

Here's a tidbit on the lap-pooings in the Court of Appeals: If a litigant wants to get a favorable decision in 30 minutes flat, all he or she has to do is give money to a corrupt justice.

This particular justice has been described by insiders as one with a "boost of music" in his wristwatch phone.

He doesn't care about the merits of a case, only how much a litigant can give him.

12 luxe vehicles recovered in condo parking lot

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation recovered at least 12 luxury vehicles during a raid in a condominium parking lot in Pasig City Sunday afternoon.

Some of the vehicles recovered included a BMW, Lexus, Toyota Prado, Lubra, and Hyundai, among others.

The vehicles were found at the two levels of a condominium parking area in Ortigas, Pasig, and Parklane3 Levin, chief of the NBI anti-human trafficking division which conducted the raid.

Levin said they were still conducting investigations to determine if the vehicles—with a total estimated value of P50 million—were smuggled or were taken by car theft syndicates.

Apart from the high-end vehicles, the NBI also found several car plates and blank chassis plates during the raid.

"We have yet to verify with the Land Transportation Office if the car plates belong to the vehicles we recovered," Levin said. "It was also possible that the people behind this were making their own license plates and were just copying existing plates of luxury cars."

Before the raid, Levin said new businessmen sought the agency's help regarding the loss of their vehicles.

"The first complainant and his Toyota Innova was not returned to him after he rented it out. The second complainant, on the other hand, claimed his Toyota Lexus was taken from him at gunpoint," he said.

Levin added that they conducted the raid after receiving information that the condominium was allegedly being used to hide vehicles that appeared to be stolen.

Police say bomb attack on Metro malls foiled

By Alexis Papa

POLICE SAID YESTERDAY THEY foiled a bomb attack on malls in Metro Manila and arrested a suspected bomber in Bicutan, Aug. 2.

Southern Police District (SPD) director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales identified the suspect as Ratsalindin Usman Tahbi alias Rasalud and Rasalindin Abdul.

Rosales also said that together with the Taguig City police, they were hunting down the leader of Tahbi's alleged terror cell, an Indonesian named Saad or Isak.

The police official said Tahbi admitted his involvement in a series of bomb attacks on the Yellow Bus Line in General Santos City, Tacurong in Sultan Kudarat and Cotabato City.

Rosales added that the suspect was also the driver of a car used in a bomb scenario in Bicutan.

Prior to his arrest, the suspect was allegedly planning to launch attacks on SM Mall and the Food Terminal Inc. in Bicutan, Taguig, Rosales said.

Tahbi was arrested at around 3 p.m. near SM Bicutan. Follow-up operations on Tahbi's rented house in Maharlika Village, Taguig City led to the recovery of an improvised explosive device.

SAYWALK NOW This is how a portion of Roxas Boulevard, Manila looks like after stalls selling alcoholic beverages were torn down.

DID YOU KNOW

ISAUG. 5, 1990, tragedy struck Cherry Hills subdivision in Antipolo City when a massive landslide buried 238 homes and killed 58 persons. The last fatality to be discovered among the nine was found nearly a year after the landslide. Geology professors said the sloping ground beneath the subdivision was a former lakebed and was, therefore, not a stable housing site. *Cynthia Rosaroso, Inquirer Research*

Many Ortigas parking areas are easy targets for 'bukas-kotse' gangs—EPD

By Kristine L. Alave

LACK OF SECURITY MEASURES in most pay parking lots in Pasig City's Ortigas Business District has made the area an easy target for "bukas-kotse" gangs.

Eastern Police District (EPD) director Chief Supt. Lutec Tecson, in a press briefing yesterday, said the Pasig City police had established checkpoints in the district after taking steps to boost security in the area. Tecson said there are about 30 pay parking lots in the district.

Owners of these facilities should be responsible for the security of vehicles inside their areas, he added.

Sr. Supt. Fatah Upano of the Pasig City police said 42 pay parking sites in the Ortigas Center are under his jurisdiction. The rest are under the Mandaluyong City police.

Of the 42 pay parking sites, only four had sufficient protection.

Tecson said he said had poor lighting and vulnerable fences, making it easy for criminals to enter and leave the premises.

Most sites had no security guards and owners from operators concerned disclaimers that they would not be responsible for losses inside their premises, Upano added.

He said most parking operators complained about the extra costs of securing their sites.

Tecson said Upano urged the Pasig and Mandaluyong city governments to require pay parking operators to provide adequate security in their areas.

Upano noted that criminal syndicates did not just get the cars of game pants, but also stole laptops and mobile phones left inside the vehicles.

METROBRIEFS

Nabbed, then released

FUGITIVE action star Ace Vergel, was arrested in Caloocan City over the weekend, but was released after several hours, a police chief in-charge said. According to Chief Supt. Rogelio Ramos, chief of the Northern Police District headquarters Unit, Vergel, Ace Vhan Aguilar in real life, was arrested in a drug bust in relation to Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City on Saturday morning.

But they're release took place this morning after it was found out by a court order lifting his warrant of arrest, "Ramos said, adding that they could be charged with arbitrary detention if they did not do so. The intelligence officer explained they had received information about the actor's appearance at the city. "We had to check that information because of his previous records," Ramos said. The former actor had been charged with rape in two cases in Baguio and Angeles cities. *Nancy Carvajal*

Fake discs torched

EIGHTY thousand pieces worth of pirated pornographic VCDs and DVDs and replicating machines seized in a Quiapo raided were set on fire yesterday by Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim as part of his crackdown on smut materials in the city. Optical Media Board (OMB) Chair Ronnie Ricketts, who was with Lim during the torching at Bonifacio Shrine, lauded the mayor for targeting Quiapo, which is notorious for the proliferation of smuggled and replicating machines. The alleged operator, Ronnie Matutetchy, 28, a native of Lanao del Norte, was also arrested in the entrapment operation at Pinky and Pinky Lodging House on Globo de Oro Street corner M. Raulona, on Saturday. The District Special Project Unit of the Manila City Intel Police acted on a tip that a certain "Ronnie" had replicating machines inside the hotel, and that he also supplied it-sized discs to vendors in Quiapo, Sta. Cruz and Recto Avenue.

Alison M. Lopez

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INQUIRER

Another wall collapses in construction site

By Julie M. Aurelio

ANOTHER WALL AT THE WILSON Builders' Depot in Pandacan City collapsed Tuesday morning, four days after the collapse of a 20-feet-tall wall killed three construction workers.

No one was hurt in yesterday's incident.

The collapse prompted city building official Ebenee Hiu to order the demolition of a third wall near the Estrellahan Subdivision in Barangay San Dionisio.

"I would be dangerous if that wall collapses one since it is near a residential area," Hiu said in a phone interview.

The city official said the second wall, which was part of the wall that collapsed Thursday afternoon, gave way at around 11:30 a.m. yesterday, with parts falling on the front gasoline station along Dr. A. Santos Ave. (Sucat-Sta. Rosal Road).

City officials are still investigating why the second wall collapsed.

Four workers were killed and nine others were hurt in the Thursday incident.

On Friday, Mayor Florencio Bermudez Jr. ordered the suspension of construction of the depot until this had completed his investigation.

Bermudez's spokesperson, Nelson Lacsamana said the city government was scrutinizing the structural design of the building and checking if the materials used by the contractor, Hoe Sing Hardhon, met the standards.

"Samples of the mix have been brought to the Bureau of Research and Standards of the Department of Public Works and Highways for analysis and testing," Lacsamana said the buyers. Results are expected this week.

The mayor also ordered Hiu to inspect other construction projects in the city to prevent a repeat of Thursday's incident.

"It would be impossible for the inquiry will be held liable under applicable provisions of the penal code," Bermudez said.

Hiu refused to comment if the owners of Wilson Builders' Depot and the contractor would be held liable for the deaths of three workers, saying they would have to complete their investigation first.

Taliban threaten more kidnaps of foreigners

SOUTH Korean Army soldiers patrolling the barbed-wire fence in Paju, north of Seoul, near the demilitarised zone (DMZ) of Panmunjon, South Korea, in this Oct. 9, 2006, photo.

GHAZNI, AFGHANISTAN—THE Taliban will convince to kidnap foreigners in Afghanistan, a purported Taliban spokesperson said on Monday, as Afghan forces sent medicines for ailing South Korean hostages held by the insurgents since July 19.

An Afghan doctor who heads a private clinic, meanwhile, said he had dropped all $2,000 worth of antibiotics, vitamins and first aid kits in need Ghazni province on Sunday intended for the Koreans, two of whom are said to be extremely ill. Dr Mohammad Hashim Wahbeg said there the Taliban regime told him that they had packed up the medicines.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the Taliban, said the lives of the 21 South Korean hostages rest in the hands of Afghan President Hamid Karzai and US President George W Bush, who are holding two days of talks at Camp David, Maryland.

"Karzai and Bush will have responsibility for whatever happens to the hostages," Ahmadi said.

Karzai said in a TV interview aired on Sunday that the Afghan government is working via five to the South Korean hostages, but he indicated it would not give in to Taliban demands to release imprisoned militants in exchange for the Koreans' lives.

The Taliban have demanded that 23 militant prisoners being held by Afghanistan and at the US base at Bagram be freed in return for the Koreans, but the Afghan government has all but ruled that option out.

"We will not do anything that will encourage hostage-taking, that will encourage terrorism. But we will do everything else to have them released," Karzai said the interview broadcast on CNN on Sunday.

Twenty-three South Koreans from a church group were kidnapped by the Taliban on July 19 while travelling from Kabul to Kandahar to work on medical and other aid projects. Two male hostages have been executed. Among the remaining 21 hostages, 16 are women.

If an agreement is not reached for its ransom negotiations, then the Taliban will not be responsible for "anything bad" that happens to the hostages, Ahmadi said.

Ahmadi said that the militants and South Korean officials remain in contact over the phone, but have not yet agreed on a location where they can hold negotiations over the fate of the captives. AP

North, South Koreans exchange fire across border

SEOUL—NORTH AND SOUTH Korean soldiers exchanged fire Monday across their heavily guarded border in the first such incident in over a year, the South's defense ministry said.

The North started the shoot-out by firing machine gun rounds, it said.

"In response, South Korean soldiers fired 16 warning shots from a machine gun. There were no casualties from the shooting," a ministry spokesperson said.

"After firing the counter-shots, our side issued a warning through a loudspeaker and demanded an apology. But there was no response from the North Korean soldiers," a spokesperson for the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said separately.

"It was not known immediately whether North Korean troops opened fire by mistake or intentionally," he said.

Cross-border shooting incidents have been rare since a landmark inter-Korean summit in 2000.

The last was on July 31 last year, when South Korean soldiers fired towards a South Korean guard post. No one was hurt.

Monday's shooting took place at about 1.30p.m. near Jeju, 160 km northeast of Seoul.

The two Korean have been separated by a 248 kilometre-long and four kilometre-wide demilitarised zone since the end of the 1950-53 war. AFP

Foreign workers are engine of Dubai's construction boom

By Jason DePorte

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB Emirates—They still make bricks down in desert destinations that pack a dozen men or more into a room. They still post contractors and city mud rods in temperatures that top 110 degrees. They still spend years away from families in India and Pakistan to earn about $3 an hour. They remain bonded to employers under terms that critics call little more than indentured servitude.

But construction workers, a million strong here and famously mistreated, have won some humble victories.

After several years of unprecedented labor unrest, the government is making peace with the army of overseas migrants who make local citizens a minority in their own country and sustain one of the world's great building booms. Regulations have been enforced, midday sun breaks, improved health benefits, upgraded living conditions and cracked down on employers framed enough to stop paying workers at all.

The result is a study of building change in a region synonymous with foreign labor and, for many years, labor abuse.

No country is as dependent on cheap foreign workers as the United Arab Emirates, where foreigners make up about 80 percent of the population and 99 percent of the private work force.

And when thousands of migrant construction workers strolled off the job last year, blocking traffic and smashing parked cars, it became clear that the summertime were over here.

"I'm not saying we don't have a problem," said Ali bin Abdulla al Kaabi, the finance minister, who was appointed by the ruling sheiks to upgrade standards and restore stability. "There is a problem. We're working in it."

Several years of quickening pace, mostly over unpaid wages, peaked in March 2006, when hundreds of workers went on a rampage near the architectural Burj Dubai, which is being built as the world's tallest building. Eight months later, Human Rights Watch accused the Emirates of "shunning workers."

For a country exerting economic and investment, the report swung. "For the UAE aspires to be a first-class global player, it can't just do it with gold Jewels and Rolls-Royces," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Rights Watch's Middle East director. "It needs to bring up to the level of standards."

Al Kaabi, 39, took office in late 2004, only what he describes as a mandate to do just that.

Faced with complaints about low wages and difficult work, Al Kaabi's first instinct was reform made here. Many workers face greater hardships at home for less pay. "We don't force people to come to this country," he said. "They're building a whole new life for their families."

But witnesses of Human Rights Watch said, "That's what exploitation is—you take advantage of someone's desperation." AFP

Millions of Aussies risk lifelong hangover

A FELLOW of Casey, a Gaelic, numbness Spain drowns in Viking park and drinks red wine on Aug. 3 during a simulation of the sands of Scandinavian warriors 1,000 years ago.

SYDNEY—TEEN MAT CONsider it a harmless tipple on the back of a good night out, but millions of Australians face the lifelong hangover of brain damage due to their drinking, health experts warned Monday.

Alcohol treatment group Access said an army as two million Australians may be at risk of permanent brain damage from heavy drinking, while more than 200,000 were living with the condition undiagnosed.

The group, which is supported by top ad agencies such as the Australian Drug Foundation and the Mental Health Council of Australia, said that new research demonstrated people had little idea of the dangers of drinking.

It said a survey it commissioned found that most drinkers were unaware at what point their boozing could lead to a permanent hangover, and many wildly underestimated how many drinks could cause lifelong harm.

Adrian Sloma Bertoni said current drinking levels, combined with ignorance of the dangers, could see an entire generation of Australians brain-damaged by alcohol.

"This is a public health crisis that is looming and it is not a question of how much you have to drink to sustain an alcohol-related brain injury, it's a question of how little," she said.

"Because binge-ella has moved to becoming a binge-drinking culture, something has to be done."

According on the national statistics office, the average Australian uses 11 drinks the equivalent of 9.8 litres of pure alcohol each year.

Affsia says six or more drinks per day for men over a period of eight to 20 years, and three or more for women, puts them at risk of alcohol-related brain damage.

The research found that almost 70 percent of men and close to 60 percent of women had little idea of the level at which the risks set in.

The findings for young men were particularly pronounced, with about 20 percent of those aged between 14 and 17 of the opinion that you would need to consume more than 21 standard drinks a day to risk permanent damage. AFP

MARIA Parnova stands next to a grave of her father Yakov Peskkov during a memorial ceremony on Aug. 1 by the mass graves of Sandormokh outside Medvezhyegorsk in northern Russia. Relatives of the victims of Stalin's purges held a ceremony at an executions site in a Russian forest on the 70th anniversary of the start of the mass killings.

A daughter remembers Stalin's purges

By Dario Thubaro

MEDVEZHYEGORSK, RUSSIA—THE last time Lira Delphath saw her father, he had blood coming out of his mouth and was being carried away in the cases by three soldiers.

Her mother was dragged away later the same day on May 19, 1938. Delphath, a 9-year-old girl at the time, remembers only her blue dress with a white collar, and the tears streaming down her cheeks.

Her parents were separated and both executed in 1937.

"I was the daughter of an enemy of the people," said Delphath, 79, one of dozens of relatives of the victims of Joseph Stalin's purges attending a memorial ceremony on Sunday by the mass graves of Sandormokh in northern Russia.

The demonstrator Pisa, organized by human rights group Memorial, marks exactly 70 years since a secret police order to execute and imprison tens of thousands of "anti-Soviet and socially dangerous elements" came into force.

The order appointed a massive sweeping up of the purges carried out by Soviet authorities against perceived enemies of the regime. Millions perished in prison camps or were executed under Soviet rule.

A few months after her mother was taken away, Delphath received a note from her that still brings tears to her eyes. The hastily scribbled note had been smuggled out of the Ivdovensky prison camp where she was imprisoned.

"Look up to where the North Star crosses Ursa Major and remember me. I am looking there, too," read the note. On the other side, it said: "I am dying. Look after my daughter."

Decades later, Delphath found out that her mother's school teacher had been taken from the camp, stripped, bound up and shot in the head along with 1,111 other prisoners in the dense pine forests of Sandormokh in November 1937.

A total of some 7,000 victims of Stalin's purges are believed to have been executed and buried in the gravelly earth of Sandormokh, close to the town of Medvezhyegorsk, a former prison camp in the region of Karelia.

Hundreds of women and flowers placed among the pine trees mark the graves.

Delphath has never managed to find out what happened in her father, Alexander Nesbovich, a leading economics professor of Saint Petersburg, then known as Leningrad. Yearbook had taken part in the Russian Revolution and had then apparently supported the coming to power of Stalin.

Like many relatives of the victims, Delphath was ostracized by Soviet authorities after had difficulty finding a job and once had to escape to another city to avoid arrest.

Memorial, which was set up in 1987, aims to keep the memory of the victims alive, despite the indifference of many Russians and the reluctance of Russian authorities to confront the past, whatever and campaigners said.

"Time is passing and the next generation might forget. People will become indifferent and there's a risk that what happened will be repeated," Delphath said. AFP

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The WORLD

Lito Lorenzo B. Dano

Epidemics feared stalking millions displaced by flood

PATNA, INDIA—FEARS GREW on Sunday that epidemics would strike the millions marooned or forced from their homes by South Asia's catastrophic floods, as the death toll hit at least 550 and criticism of relief efforts spread.

The last two weeks have seen some of the worst flooding in living memory affecting about 16 million people in the region, thousands of them made homeless or left stranded.

In India's poor Bihar state, four air force helicopters dropped food, medicines and clothing to some of the 19 million affected.

"Each pilot is carrying out 12 sorties a day and they have expected huge destruction in central and north Bihar," said Ramesh Kumar Jha, a Defense Ministry spokesperson in Kolkata.

Shamir Rahilli Chaturvedi, health chief in India who is coordinating UN work in Bihar, said aid agencies and authorities must do more to prevent outbreaks of measles, gastroenteritis, dengue fever and other diseases, or "we will see many deaths." He said 20 helicopters were needed in Bihar, where 87 people have died.

Hundreds of thousands are camped out on elevated highways, railway tracks and relief embankments as deep floodwaters swirl around them.

Annual monsoon rains are a natural blessing, vital for farmers but killing hundreds every year. This year much of eastern India and two-thirds of Bangladesh have been inundated.

The Indian government says more than 1,200 people have died in this year's monsoon, not including the latest casualties.

Rahilli said in the 15 days to Aug. 2, 98 mm of rain had fallen in Bihar's worst affected areas, compared to normal average rainfall of 1.3 mm.

Unicef is mobilizing doctors by land and boat amid a mounting children against measles.

Those who were reached on Sunday showed their desperation.

"I have been drinking one small piece of bread among four of my children, and I have been starving and somehow surviving," a sobbing Sirji Ahmed told a local television reporter in Bihar. Reuters

Labs could be source of new foot-and-mouth outbreak in Britain

LONDON—BRITISH HEALTH inspectors confirmed two veterinary laboratories in southern England on Sunday after it was discovered that the strain of foot-and-mouth disease at a farm 6.44 kilometers was the same as the one used in the production of vaccine at the facilities.

Environment Secretary Hilary Benn said that the laboratories, which house the government's Institute of Animal Health and a private pharmaceutical company, Merial Animal Health, were a "possible" source of the virus but that a definitive conclusion had not been reached.

Inspectors will concentrate on security at the laboratories during their search for a possible link of the virus, Benn said.

He appealed to farmers to continue monitoring their livestock for symptoms of the disease, and he said a protection zone around the affected farm had been established to contain the bloodstream.

In an statement, the environment department said the virus used at the laboratories for vaccine production was "not one currently known to be recently found in animals."

"But relatively early discovery of a possible local source of the disease found to settle at a farm at Guildford, in Surrey increased hopes that the British authorities should be able to get the situation under control and avert the panic that engulfed the agriculture industry during an outbreak in 2001.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said the strain of the virus found at the farm was used in a vaccine both manufacturer last month by Merial Animal Health.

The company is an arm of Merial LLC, which is wholly owned by the American drug maker Merck & Co. and the French company Sanofi-Aventis. Merial Animal Health announced that it was suspending production of the vaccine.

Benn announced that four farms that had reported cattle with symptoms similar to foot-and-mouth disease had been found not infected, a sign that the disease may not have spread extensively.

Even so, Benn warned that until the government was confident that the land bound the source of the virus, farmers should remain on guard. "It's very important that people continue to be vigilant," he said. AFP

Pollsters tell Howard he's dishonest, too old

CANBERRA—AUSTRALIAN conservative Prime Minister John Howard is seen as old and dishonest, his private pollsters said, in a blunt message delivered months ahead of elections.

After 11 years in power, with no sign of running away from it, Howard is three of the youthful Opposition Labor Party leader Kevin Rudd, who is seen as compassionate, genuine and likeable, the poll found in a newspaper showed.

"Brief research reflected some of the negative views that were around. It was done a couple of months ago. I think our position has improved since then," Howard, who turned 68 on July 26, told Australian radio. "I'm not particularly amazed or embarrassed by it that document."

Howard has served four consecutive terms in office and many call an election before the end of the year. He said the poll was no surprise and reflected Labor's attacks on his age.

Published opinion polls show Howard would be overwhelmingly defeated if an election were held now, with the government trailing Labor by more than 14 percentage points.

The private polling, leaked to Sydney's daily Telegraph newspaper, confirms the surge in support for the center-left Labor Party, with Howard and his wife income earners after Rudd, 50 in September, was elected leader in December 2006.

Howard, it said, was considered to be "increasingly rattled and out-responding world events," while Rudd's election as Labor leader gave voters renewed confidence and provided a chance for a generational change in Australian politics.

Rudd said he expected Howard to push populist policies to try to slow Rudd's rising support ahead of the election, widely expected in November or December.

"What I know is that we're up against a very clever politician, a very cunning politician, and there are still quite a few tactics to go before this election is called and anything could happen," Rudd told reporters in Canberra. Reuters

SEEING DOUBLE Twin sisters Lisa and Julie Voth pose for a picture during Twins Day, the largest annual gathering of twins in the world, on Aug. 5 in Twinsburg, Ohio. AP

WHAT'S INSIDE
Gentle Gabe knows where his heart is /A22

SPORTS

Editor Teodoro S. Plata Jr. Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Cabua

Woods tramples field by 8 strokes /A24

HOME SWEET DBC! Mark, Tony dela Cruz, Jayjay Helterbrand, Gabe Norwood, Marlo Raymundo and Rudy Wilburn (starting second from left) arrive with the rest of the San Miguel-Air team from the Fiba Asia Championship in Tokushima, Japan, where they wound up in ninth place. Inset, PBA commissioner Noli Eala (left) confers with Clarence Bolgar

Iran five secures 1st Olympic stint

TOKUSHIMA, JAPAN—HAMED HADADI scored 31 points Sunday as Iran defeated Lebanon, 74-69, in the final of the Fiba Asia Championship, securing a spot in the Beijing Olympics.

Lebanon's Omar Jaffali hit a 3-pointer with 43 seconds left to cut Iran's lead to 70-69. But Hadadi's jump shot with 29 seconds left gave Iran a 72-69 lead, and Mohammad Siddikoglu closed out the scoring with a dunk at the buzzer for Iran.

Iran, playing in its first Asia Championship final, was the only team from the 16-nation tournament that booked a place in next summer's Olympics.

It was the first time that Iran—bronze medalists at last year's Doha Asiad Games—won the continental title since the inaugural 1960 championship, with its previous best finish as fourth place in 1993 (*See photo on /A23*).

Earlier Sunday, South Korea defeated Kazakhstan, 80-76, to win the bronze medal and earn a place in the qualifying tournament.

Ha Seung-jin scored 25 points, Kim Joo-sung added 16 points and Cha Jae-Won scored 11 points for the bronze medal team.

Lebanon and South Korea are now eligible for the final Olympic qualifying round, also involving teams from the Americas, Europe, Africa and Oceania, which will take place next July.

In the playoff round, Jordan beat Taiwan, 87-74, to take fifth place, and Qatar edged Japan, 86-82, to finish seventh.

Olympic host China, which crushed cox in the First round, has an automatic spot for the Beijing Games. /AFP

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We're sorry: An open letter from RP five

By Francis T.J. Ochoa

TOKUSHIMA, JAPAN—WHEN THE smiles were a little bit wider, and the laughter a little bit more genuine than when the wound of an Olympic failure was fresh, players of the San Miguel-RP team that finished in ninth place midnight Saturday night just who they were accountable for.

The Filipino basketball fan.

Not only was it the hopes of their countrymen they were fighting for, but the salaries they earn from the PBA, the ones that help them maintain multi-million-peso homes and luxury vehicles, all come from consumer cash.

And, see, before leaving a Japanese countryside that will be forever Solcon's to their hearts as the graveyard of dreams, the players drafted a mutual agreement—one recorded in video—in their countrymen.

And naturally, it opened this way: Dear Filipino basketball fan;

"Sorry," said Asi Taulava. "We know we disappointed the country. We're sorry things didn't work out the way they were supposed to be."

"I hope you understand we came up a little short," said Jimmy Alapag.

"We just want to say sorry that we came up short," said Jaybee Sobers-berard.

"I wish the outcome was different," said Sunday Salgado.

The apologies, of course, were for finishing No. 1 in the consolation round pool of the Olympic qualifying tournament. The whole country had hoped that the team would bag the title and book a slot for a return appearance in the Beijing 2008 edition of the Games.

"Gusto po namin ang ginhawi, pero di natin inaasahan ang ating nasasaksihan sa Olympic dream. (We did everything we could but we failed to reach the Olympic dream that we really aspired for)," said Ervin Reynoso.

"We're very disappointed but we tried our best," said Mick Pennisi.

"Through no one offered excuses, the players' open letter did offer words at the bright side.

"I hope our play here in Tokushima has made everybody proud," said Alapag. "I think we earned our respect through the tenacious comeback to basketball. Hopefully this is just the first step."

"Even though we lost, we still had a record of five [wins] and two [losses]," said Mick Cagulio.

"I hope you guys had a glimpse of what's coming for the national team," said Kelly Williams.

"We did the best we could to make you guys proud," said Dirk Mold.

Nice. But they're expecting any sympathy in return.

"Kahit di natin nakuha yung gusto natin sa Olympics, nandun pa rin tayo (Even if we didn't get the Olympic spot, you were always there)," said Gordon Henderson.

"Pero ilyan, po 'to kapa, kahit marami'ng masabi (You're still there, even if we miss out [on]," said Ronnie Ricardo.

"Maraming salamat sa pag-suporta niyo sa RP team, sa last five months na nakipiga (Thanks for supporting the RP team during the last five months of sacrifice)," said Rashiel De Ocampo.

"We may not have been blessed, but we still appreciate your support," said James Yap.

And then in the ashes of defeat, they dug up hope for the future.

"The journey isn't over, it's just the start," said Gabe Norwood.

"Pre-Philippines will make the Olympics more," said Tony dela Cruz.

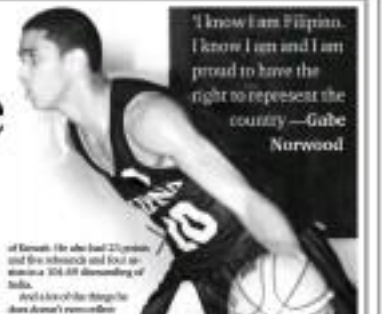
Of course, what would an open letter be without a:

"We have you guys very much," said Hodge Bread.

Signed, the Philippine national team.

And for the Gentlemen's pact: "I just wish the younger guys the best of luck and remember that they're representing the country and not just their individual selves," said Taulava.

Gentle Gabe knows where his heart is



By Francis T.J. Ochoa

TOKUSHIMA, JAPAN—IF GABE Norwood felt at home with the Philippine team that finished ninth in the Fiba Asia Champs midnight, it was for a reason that isn't too difficult to comprehend.

Norwood was born.

And those were two reasons to be basketball-crazy, Norwood found something familiar about the San Miguel-RP squad. The team was an underdog hoping to survive a deep out-drag, 16 nations-tournament offering the ultimate prize: A ticket to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"Being an underdog is something I got used to in college," Norwood said.

The military knows it's plausible to turn the starting guard of George Mason University two years ago, when the school made one of the most improbable runs in US NCAA history. A no-name in the finals' 16, George Mason reached the Final Four until its Cinderella run was halted by eventual champion Florida.

"Still, playing there tonight (so that anybody can hear anybody)," Norwood said. "I honestly felt that way coming into the tournament."

And then there's the other reason why Norwood felt at home with the Philippine team. Because there was never a moment in his life that he felt detached from the country.

"I'm a very grounded person," said the 22-year-old navigator. "My parents taught me well the importance of family and of knowing where you're from."

How grounded is he? Instead of pursuing a chunk of still-important at his fleeting inside it is a US NCAA Final Four game, the coaching Norwood, who led the Bone College Area High School in Pennsylvania to the state title, he quit to pursue an almost his college career was that: "I was not heavily recruited. George Mason was the only Division I school that offered me a scholarship."

Norwood helped add ceiling to a wing combo that often got dwarfed in the tournament. And even as a RP team rookie, he had memorable big games that warrants would pay to have. Norwood had 14 points, five rebounds and five assists, disseminating his all-around talent to an 89-59 rout of Kuwait. He also had 23 points and five rebounds and four assists in a 104-69 dismantling of India.

And a lot of the things he does doesn't earn coffee-in the stat sheet.

Everything he does for a passion because of one reason.

"Every game has been unprecedented, especially to take the court for the country," Norwood said.

He never even had to worry about the questions he might have to face as a PBA Air rotation big the RP-squad. In fact, while basketball collinds were mounting, nervously trying to process his papers in time to make him eligible to play for the country, Norwood was relaxed.

"I know I am Filipino," Norwood said. "Even if the documents didn't come out...but, I would only be a piece of paper saying I'm not. But I know I am and I am proud to have the right to represent the country."

The decision of residing is in the NBA, although not this year.

"There are many tentatives to my son in Europe and in the States and my spirit and I will discuss those," Norwood said. "But I let him know where my heart is."

His heart is home.

MEMBERS and officials of the four national team celebrate their victory. (See story on page A21)

PWU, RTU share early lead

PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY AND Rizal Technological University made both plums' last in their respective groups last season, posted lopsided victories over the weekend to take the early lead in the PWU-AM 2007 season senior basketball tournament.

PWU swapped Lim Bon Collegio Alabang, 68-47, in Saturday's opening-day game at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium while RTU humbled Imelda Aganinside College, 82-46, yesterday at the Lyceum gym.

St. Francis of Assisi College joined PWU and RTU atop Group B by dealing SSCA its second loss, 57-39.

College of St. Benilde, behind the 21 points of teammate Salvacion, also posted its first win, an 88-31 rout of World Citi College.

The Lady Blazers then tied opening-day winners Lyceum and St. Scholastica's College at 1-1 in Group A.

The former A defending champion Lady Pirates beat the Centro Escolar University Scorpions, 67-48, and St. Scho downed the season's former B winner Mapúa College, 66-46.

Basketball is not for Filipinos

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Mitgo

AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE, local sports officials should now accept the naked truth that basketball is not for Filipinos because height is the 'big factor in the sport. We should know our limitations.

I am not being unpatriotic but our chances of competing in next year's Beijing Olympics...and in future Olympics—is not within our capacity.

Emma we have a fast, lefty and tall mine—which I doubt very much because our players are not born genetically tall...our chances are still in future Olympic Games and other International cage tournaments such as the World Basketball Championship and in the Asian Games.

In the words of former POC president, retired Lt. Jolly Mabanag: "Other countries, particularly Jordan, Iran and Lebanese, have improved tremendously while the Philippines has remained stagnant."

The Philippines is only good in the lower-category tournaments like the Southeast Asian Games and the Stella Club Champions Cup.

A huge budget of P76 million was spent for the five-month long preparations of the national team in the recent Fiba Asia men's championship and all that we could manage was finish ninth in a field of 16.

* * *

I welcome wholeheartedly the filing of House Bill No. 3307, which aims to establish a Bureau with the abilities Affairs (Office PSAC) in every province, city and municipality in the Philippines. Without question, this landmark bill will benefit millions of Filipinos with disabilities.

According to youthful lawyer-lep. Ferdinand Martin Bernadino of Leyte, principal author of the bill and one of the new members of the 14th congress, "there is no office that completely handles the affairs of these persons with disabilities."

Under existing laws, disabled persons are provided with a package of services but these do not go far enough.

Bernadino said HB No. 3307 would complete these services if every local government has a PDAO.

The bill also seeks to provide equal opportunities for the disabled, giving them the same rights in education, employment, physical fitness and health services as those enjoyed by persons without disabilities.

These handicapped persons need not suffer hardships and endure the loss of sight, speech and hearing or limb. They should lead a normal life, not a life of suffering and grief.

Remember, explained that the government could provide the funding for the establishment of PDAO, especially in provinces and towns which do not have enough funds.

* * *

Speaking of persons with disabilities, I am dubbing the subject to the sad plight of the differently-abled athletes. And I'm aiming my appeal to my good friend, Bienvid Rep. Monico Puentevella.

Over the years and, for the sake of equality and fairness, I have been writing about the need to provide the differently-abled Filipino with a genuine more compensation law similar to Republic Act 9064, which grants cash incentives and other benefits to medal winners in the Olympics, Asian and Southeast Asian Games.

Also, my appeal has remained unheeded.

In my opinion, these athletes with disabilities are the true Olympians. They train and work hard like all the normal able-bodied athletes, oftentimes doing the country proud by reaping honors in sporting events such as the Asian Paralympic Games.

Today, indeed, these athletes with disabilities should be amply rewarded. For watched a few Paralympic Games and I never cease to marvel at how these disabled athletes demand exceptional skills, pushing themselves to the limit of human endurance.

SPORTSWATCH

Paeng trains HK coaches for US Bowling Congress

HIGHCLIMBING

GREENVALE, WISCONSIN—Filipino olympic bowling legend Rafael "Paeng" Nepomuceno (left) of Hong Kong recently in Asian bowling coaches in behalf of the United States Bowling Congress.

Nepomuceno, a USBC Level I and Bronze Instructor, certified 9 Chinese USBC coaches during a series of seminars.

The three-day seminar held at the Mei Foo Bowling Center was translated to Chinese by participant Sylvia Wong, a physical education major and member of the Hong Kong Bowling Council.

The 50-year-old Nepomuceno, a six-time world bowling champion, is widely regarded as the greatest international bowler in the sport's history. His left-handed, who won named Federation Internationale des Quilleurs (bowling) world governing body) across of the Millennium in 1998, has won 117 bowling titles worldwide, including a record four World Cup championships.

RP pugs ready for World Cup

TEMPESTUOUS FILIPINO BOXERS HAVE SO pressed their readiness to prove to the world that the Philippines is the nation's hotbed of boxing superstars.

This week, the powers led by superbantam Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista, will be in contact with Filipino fans over the radio from their training camp in Los Angeles.

Seven Filipino fighters will battle Mexican foes in the "Boxing World Cup: Heroes vs Philippines" on Aug. 12 at the Arco Arena in Sacramento, California.

The Filipino boxers will be on-air live over "Sports Chat," a morning radio program heard Monday to Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 9 a.m. over dZSP1 Sports Radio 918 kHz.

Bernardino to Hall of Fame

THE LATE, BELOVED EMILIO "JUN" Bernardino, Jr. will be posthumously inducted to PBA Press Corps' Hall of Fame when the rookies hold the 14th edition of their annual bash on Aug. 12 at the Bayview Park Hotel in Manila.

The PBA top honcho from 1984-2002 was cross-bone winner of the Executive of the Year award. He died on March 24.

The PBA Philippine Cup Perpetual Trophy-now named after Bernardino, whose endorsement is for the Hall is one of the highlights in the awards night.

Barangay Ginebra's Jeng Jolmes and PBA Coach Chot Reyes are the lead racing contenders for the Coach of the Year and Top Executive awards, respectively.

Zarma, Petiza gain pool finals

MEXICO KILLJARO ESALE F HITS RICKY Zarma and Rolando Petiza handed their respective foes to finish unbeaten in the 8-1 male 10-ball race San Miguel Beer Philippine 9-ball Open at Pasig's Skyline of Robinson's Galleria in Ortigas Ave. City.

The 25-year-old Zarma, who hails from Dumaguete City, beat teammate Pantilo Dantuang, 7-5, while Petiza, a native of Bacolod City, stunned 2006 Mosconi 9-ball representative Jun Bautista, 7-1, in the winner's brackets to grab the first two slots in the Grand Finals on Sept. 14 to 15.

Dantuang and Bautista remained the last two slots from the losers' brackets.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

5K run for ailing PMA grad

THE "TAKBO PARA KAY APUEL" 5K RUN kicks off at 5 a.m. on Aug. 19 at the Wack-Wack Golf and Country Club.

The race aims to raise funds for 2nd Lt. Ariel Toledo, a Philippine Military Academy graduate who is suffering from cancer of the bile duct.

Registration fee is P350. Contributions to fund Toledo's continuing medication are also welcome. For inquiries, call Gemma Arevalo at 309-5103/5104.

Poker top guns coming

WORLD-CLASS POKER COMES TO THE Philippines as it hosts the opening leg of the Asia Pacific Poker Tour on Aug. 24 to 26 at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila.

Produced by online poker giant PokerStars.com, name Samar Pokerstars.com) and sanctioned by Pagcor, the APPT is easily the richest tournament of its kind in Asia.

With a buy-in of $2,500 and a field of some 500 international players, the tour makes a grand stop of about P25 million.

Daniel "The Kid" Negreanu, the genius from Canada ranked by many to be the best in the planet, and Joseph Hachem, the 2005 World champion with over $2 million in tournament winnings in the last two years alone head the list of top visitors.

Ongoing in bars and casinos all over the country are satellites for players who can't afford the $2,500 buy-in.

Winners of these smaller tournaments qualify for the three-day main event at Barclay's. "The event is really quite momentous," said Franco Maloreta, PokerStars' marketing head and principal consultant in the country. "Hence, we want to give every Pinoy a chance to compete for the top."

Pacquiao off to Los Angeles for Barrera rematch

PACQUIAO: Early training

FILIPINO SUPERSTAR MANNY Pacquiao finally left for Los Angeles last night to start training for his much awaited Oct. 6 rematch with former WBC superfeatherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera.

A Pacquiao camp insider said the Pinoy ring icon postponed his scheduled flight Saturday and flew to Cebu instead to sign a multi-million deal with M. Lhuillier, the jewelry chain based in Cebu.

Fight promoter Bob "Wukee" Arum, a close friend of Pacquiao, said the popular slugger was not to leave last night.

Pacquiao and Barrera duke it out again at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in an event co-promoted by Golden Boy Promotions and Top Rank.

Pacquiao dropped Barrera in the eleventh round of their 2003 non-title encounter in Texas.

Barrera had believed he would roll it quits if he could not get a rematch with Pacquiao, and the return encounter became a reality only when Golden Boy Promotions and Top Rank had amicably settled their promotional dispute over Pacquiao in a highly publicized mediation proceeding in Los Angeles recently.

Arum, also Pacquiao's business associate, said yesterday that Pacquiao at 28 had shelves if he would leave last night, as he had yet to finalize an endorsement deal with the Cebu-based jewelry chain.

Pacquiao was in Gov. Stanley Ong Saturday evening where he was a special guest at Hagdok with DJ Dyan Castillo. Champ Nonito Donaire Jr. is being seen by co-promoted with Rahal.

The fight card featured the IBF lightweight championship bout pitting JC Solitano and defending champion Ariel Pertos. Solitano defeated Pertos.

Pacquiao is expected to train for eight weeks at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

Reports coming out of Mexico said that Barrera has already started training for the rematch. Rafaer L. Lagumbay, contributor

SEAG quint: Air21 offers six players

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE PHILIPPINE QUINTET TO THE SOUTHeast Asian Games in Thailand this December has been amended of reinforcements from the Philippine Basketball Association.

Air21 offered yesterday its key players to the national squad after SEAG project officials raised its manpower problems during a recent meeting of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas board of directors.

"We are willing to loan six of our best players in the team," said Air21 president Lim Ah-eem.

The Express quartet Baldwin in the last PBA Fiesta Cup, losse a roster that includes Mythical Team member Gary David, dare-think king KG Canaleta, All-Defensive Team members Armond Sanoso and Wynne Arboleda, big men Moises Ita and Mark Telan, and RP-bio Filipino team member Rashidi de Ocampo.

"We cannot say no these kind of players to ensure our success in the SEA Games," said SBP Ken Romero, Harbour Center owner and SEAG team project manager.

Although the Express are willing to adjust their game schedule, Alvarez said Romero must first settle with commissioner Noli Eala before we allow our players to play for the SF team," said Alvarez.

The young center mentioned by Jamel Bacali has also been eyeing FilAm guard Gabe Norwood, is ineligible of the San Miguel-RP five, in the country's SEA-Games selection bid.

"We can't take [our SEAG opponents] lightly. If we're not careful, there might be a major upset," said Romero, adding that the team bannered by amateur star Jason Castro is still in search for talented rookie players.

UE standout Mark Barkeser (left) disputes possession with Adamson's Parnell Cubeiro in Sunday's game won by the Warriors, 93-91.

Stats back up Warriors' dominance

By Jasmine W. Payo

POOR UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST VOWED TO SHARPEN ITS SHOOTING skills this season, coach Boboi Pumaren made sure his Warriors would use shutdown their defensive game.

and the result turned out to be an unarguable campaign in the UAAP men's basketball competition.

"We've been working very hard to improve every aspect of our game," said Pumaren after the Warriors completed a 7-0 sweep of the first round.

And Pumaren intends to continue pushing his team's even if the Warriors have emerged as the league's best offensive and defensive squad.

"There are still lapses in our game," he said. "A lot of teams are improving, so we also want to keep on improving."

The Warriors led the league in scoring with an average of 86.9 points in seven games built on a league-best 45.2 percent shooting clip.

The league's official statisticians and fourmiles ranked La Salle as No. 2 with 81.9 points per game followed by defending champion University of Santo Tomas at 79.1.

The Warriors remained in full control at the defensive end by limiting their opponents to an average of 68.6 points.

For Ramon gave up an average of 69.3 points to be second with Ateneo (fifth at 71.4 points.

The Warriors led in other area department was rebounding assists (39.6 rpg), fastbreak points (15.4 ppg) and turnover points (22.4 ppg).

Four Warriors also landed in the top 10 in the individual statistical race when UST's star center Jerry Cruz stood at No. 1 with a 16.2 ppg and 10.7 rebounds per game.

Scoring leader Bristol Cabahug of Adamson came in second (20 ppg and 6.9 rpg), followed by WU's Jericho Acuna (13.2 ppg and 10 rpg), La Salle's Rico Maierhofer (10.9 ppg and 9 rpg) and JC Cantu (14.1 ppg and 3 assists per game). Ellis Kelvin Gregorio (11.9 ppg) and 10.5 Jonathan Hernandez (10.4 ppg).

6 shuttlers seeing action in world tilt

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BY THE LUCK OF THE DRAW, THE PHILIPpines will be unveiling its biggest delegation ever at 16 players to the 2007 World Badminton Championships slated Aug. 13 to 19 in Kuala Lumpur.

National team head coach Arnel Chan yesterday announced that nine pairs from the country would be "destroyers" to the prestigious event to be held in one of the world's badminton hotbeds.

Sisters Paulose and Paula Cheat in the women's doubles and team mainstays Rego Arnaldo and Lloyd Ilongo in the men's doubles earned the equivalent of "wild cards" in the event.

This will be their maiden stint in the tournament that ranks the world's top 16 players.

The four will join outright qualifiers Kronne and Bronwin Anunciso, who are currently the only world-ranked Filipino shooters at 37th in the mixed doubles.

"We're excited because we have more players in the world championships, which is the dream of every badminton player," said Chan.

The Anunciso, who were ranked as high as 11th, are trying to earn enough points to make the Beijing Olympics next year.

They are also expected to see action when the Philippines fields a "token representative" to the Thailand Southeast Asian Games this December.

Squires gain Final 4 slot; Staglets nip Cubs

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	6	1
S Sebastian	5	2
San Beda	4	3
Jose Rizal	3	4
CSB-LSGH	2	5
Perpetual	1	6

(ALWAYS THURSDAY / Trivia Arena, San Juan)
11 p.m. — Altapa vs Letran (Blu)
(Up vs — Alib vs Perpetual Help (Grn))

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LETRAN NABBED THE FIRST FINAL FOUR berth even as defending champion San Sebastian earned one San Beda yesterday in the NCAA junior basketball tournament at The Arena in San Juan.

The Squires ripped the CSB-La Salle University-Jaime Hilarios, 113-96, for their sixth straight victory and clinched a ticket to the Final Four with a 6-1 record.

The Staglets also relied on big scorers Ryan Buenafe and Arvie Bringas who posted close-to-double figures in their 79-77 triumph over the Red Cubs.

Ryan Jovi Cipriano shot 28 points as host Jose Rizal University downed University of Perpetual Help, 96-75. The win improved the Light Bombers's record to 4-4 while the Altarists dropped to 1-6.

The scores

JOSE RIZAL 96 — Cipriano 28, Lucas 19, Bringas 14, Dael 14, Delgado, Jr. 13, Cruz 7, Delgado, Jr. 6, Madrid 2, Andrada 0.

LSB-JAIME HILARIOS 79 — Pamilgan 32, Dalisay 13, Dela Cruz 12, Abad 11, Lalaguna 5, Bautista 4, Ayala 2, Sambrana 0, Ramos 0, Antonio 0, Martinez 0.

Quarters: 27-32, 42-41, 61-63, 79-77

TWO CHAMPS. Hewitt crowned world flyweight champion Hendra Gunawan (second from left) and world interflyweight king Pornsaksi Sandee (fourth from left) as a presidential congratulatory salute by President Macapagal-Arroyo during the two boxers' recent courtesy call at Malacañang Palace. Becoming the pair are GMA chair Eric Buhain (left) and Thunderbird Resorts executives Raul Sunico, COO of Philippine operations (second left), and Alberto Lusico, CFO (second right). Thunderbird Resorts, Inc. is Team Gunawan' training sponsor.

Best Center SBP-Passerelle tourney gets under way

THE 22ND SEASON OF THE Mills-sponsored Best Center Small Basketeers of the Philippines-Passerelle tournament got underway recently, kicking off the country's preparations for the 2010 Youth Olympic Festival.

Beginning tonight, expect Rizal's record 24 schools took to the court as the country's top basketball officials announced that the nets tournament's top players will be chosen to compete in the Festival set next month.

This news is part of the country's long-term preparations for the first-ever Youth Olympics, featuring athletes with ages 14 to 18.

Heading the field are last year's SBP MCB champion La Salle Greenhills and Passerelle NCR and national titlist Ateneo de Davao College.

On hand to encourage the participants during the opening ceremonies Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny Pangilinan and SBP vice chair Ricky Vargas.

They were joined by Best Center founder Mr. Jorge, Small Basketeers president Larry Mamaligan and basketball stars Benjie Paras, Bong Hawkins and Sunny Edrosolan.

2 US coaches working on nat'l clouters

By Jose Navarro

TWO US MAJOR LEAGUE coaches are in town to conduct a three-week clinic in preparation for the dailies of the national baseball team to the Southeast Asian Games in December.

Baseball chief Hector Navarro's San Jose Lamoiger of the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees' David Feller after the Philippine Olympic Committee tapped the Philippine Amateur Baseball Association to revamp the roster squad that finished last in last year's 10th Asian Games.

Lamoiger and Feller came from the US Major League Baseball coaches corps program, a project of the MLB which aims to send highly skilled college and professional coaches to spread the popularity of the sport.

"Both Lamoiger and Feller could easily provide us with fresh inputs on the technical aspects of the game," said Navarro. "These inputs will help us in our bid to retain the SEA Games baseball crown that we won in 2005."

Lamoiger, who served as scout and bullpen coach for the Red Sox during the 2005 and 2006 MLB seasons, and Feller arrived last week. Navarro said the two have agreed to help train the national clouters for free.

Feller had brief stints with the coaching staff of the Yankees while Lamoiger, a cum laude from Harvard University, took time out from coaching the baseball varsity team of St. Albans School in Washington.

Following the directive of the POC, the long-serving Pelaz head said tryouts are being held daily to infuse fresh blood on the team. Navarro added that the final SEAG lineup would be submitted to the POC on Aug. 13.

SBP Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny V. Pangilinan makes the ceremonial toss as Best Center founder Mrs. Jorge and SBP-SBP vice chair Ricky Vargas look on during the recent opening of the 22nd Mills-sponsored Best Center SBP Passerelle tournament.

SPORTS

Woods tramples field by 8 strokes

AKRON, OHIO—TIGER WOODS LOOKED as unbeatable as ever Sunday at Firestone.

Woods stunned a one-shot deficit to two holes, then buried Rory Sabbatini and the rest of the field to win the Bridgestone Invitational for the third straight year and send him to the PGA Championship with his game in good shape.

Woods made a 12-foot par putt on the final hole that kept him a stroke ahead of Sabbatini and Justin Rose, tying a PGA Tour record for most consecutive one-goal margins.

It was the second time Woods has strung together three straight victories in this World Golf Championship, and he continued his dominance in these NGC events by winning for the 14th time in 25 tries.

Sabbatini shot 74 and was left in his wake again.

The fiery South African also lost a one-shot lead to Woods in the Wachovia Championship, then missed a brief stint by claiming later than Woods looked "beatable as ever."

Five-hole stretch

Set on this course, Woods picked up five shots on a five-hole stretch along the front nine, and it was no contest after that. He joined Jack Nicklaus (Augusta National) and Alex Ross (Pinehurst No. 2) as the only players to win six times on the same course.

Next up is Southern Hills and the PGA Championship for the final major, something Woods has failed to win in four years.

"This might just give a little more confidence," Woods said.

Red numbers

First-rebuted Firestone, but it didn't make it any easier. Woods finished at 8-under 272, the only player to finish under par. It was the first time he has won a tournament as the only player to red numbers (the other two were his US Open victories).

Woods turned in the only bogey-free round on Sunday and played for the middle of the greens on the back nine when he had control of the tournament. He more than once overshot the PGA Tour by at least eight shots.

"It's a major-style golf course, and I took at his record in the majors," Rose said after setting par on the 18th for a 68. "He always seems to be up there. The harder the course, the better he does."

Woods started the final round one shot behind Sabbatini, and when they made the turn as the rain began to fall, white flags would have been appropriate than umbrellas.

Sabbatini was shaken to the point that he ordered a spectator removed.

Woods essentially won the tournament by picking up five shots on a five-hole stretch on the front nine, but the catch hole was ahead. Its expanse in the final group was all over the map and headed for big numbers, with Woods the constant ahead.

Sabbatini took five to reach the green and made double bogey, and as he walked toward the 10th tee, a spectator called out to him, "Hey Rory, still think Tiger is beatable?"

Sabbatini turned and glared, then barked at a police officer, "Take his [expletive] out of here."

Chris DiMarco picked up his first top-10 finish on the PGA Tour since he was runner-up to Woods at the last British Open, shooting with a 70 to tie for fourth with Vince Linnett (68).

Woods earned $1,125,000 dollars for his 59th career victory. Since 2005, Woods has not got more than three starts on the PGA Tour without winning. AP

LORENA Ochoa is lifted by her caddy Dave Brendan after hoisting one. REUTERS

Ochoa cops 1st major

ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND — TIGER PEGple who doubted Lorena Ochoa would win a major had better keep it to themselves.

She has all her big rivals at St. Andrews, the home of golf, in the first women's pro event to be staged there. She led all four rounds and was in front from the ninth hole on Thursday. She was six ahead after the third round and won by four strokes.

Satisfied?

The Mexican Montana battled 31 mph (50 kph) winds Saturday and morning rain Sunday to win the Women's British Open the fourth and final major on the LPGA Tour. After her final round 75, she carded a 5-under 287 and only two other players broke par.

And the Wining Lore and Maria Hjorth, who finished with 73s for 1-under, never got close. The 4-stroke lead at the end was the largest anyone got all day.

Now she has her first major and Ochoa, at No. 1 in the world rankings, looks set to win more. That would be an even better answer to her critics.

"This is my fifth year on the tour and my first time ranked No. 1 in the world," she said. "And there were a lot of people saying that I wasn't good enough or that I couldn't win a major or when am I going to win a major.

"And I have always taken all the comments and understood every well because I didn't win. I think that now it's a big step forward. I did it and there's no more to say."

Ochoa already had a 6-stroke lead at the end of the third round and maintained that until just after the turn at St. Andrews, when she missed a scary four-footer.

But her only problem came at the 17th, by which time she was free ahead and winning.

Her second shot landed in a pot bunker to the left of the fairway, still some way short of the green and her ball was only a few inches away from the steep front side of the trap.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon congratulated Ochoa personally to congratulate her, saying the victory "fills all Mexicans with pride." Calderon called the golfer "an example to all, especially for the youth of our country." AP

TIGER Woods watches his approach shot on the ninth hole during the final round Sunday. AP

Flesch completes coast-to-coast victory

RENO, NEVADA—STEVE FLESCH completed a wire-to-wire victory in the $2.6 million Reno-Tahoe Open Sunday and finished his birth in the PGA Championship that starts Thursday in Oklahoma. Flesch, who looks a thin wild hand into the final round, fourteen-under-three birdies and three bogeys to win by five-stroke margin. The 48-year-old American captured the third victory of his career—his first to last years—and became the first wire-to-wire winner this year on the tour. His wife put 72 gave him a 72-under total of 272. Charles Warren (71) and Nino-born Kevin Stadler (70) finished tied for second at 10-under 273. AFP

Hamilton posts 3rd win as Alonso sulks

HAMILTON

BUDAPEST—At 37 they did not already have enough to worry about, Formula One leader McLaren could have the cruel task of forcing Alonso walking out at the end of the season.

With the double world champion seemingly no longer accepting second with 22-year-old British rookie Lewis Hamilton after a turbulent Hungarian Grand Prix weekend, the speculation was rife.

"One thing's for sure, Alonso won't be at McLaren next year," a source close to another team told Reuters at the Hungaroring.

While nothing is certain in Formula One, other than that there will always be intrigue and speculation, the sentiment was strong enough for many boss Ron Dennis to issue quarantine about the Spaniard's future.

The race saw Alonso stripped of pole position and demoted five places on the starting grid.

Hamilton, elevated to pole, led every lap and celebrated his third win in 13 races to go seven points clear of his disgruntled teammate.

Hamilton said that Alonso, who finished fourth, had not spoken to him since Saturday.

Alonso had hoped to arrive at McLaren-to-be-same after a 2006 season without any wins for the Mercedes-powered team. Reuters

MARIA Sharapova puts after winning a point.

Roddick stops rookie's romp

WASHINGTON—TOP SEED ANDY RODDICK ended Du Lary Lah run of 11 title-ended Aire to reach Washington final today, beating 6-4, 7-6 in the $400,000 Washington Open on Sunday. Roddick served a crushed 15 aces in the 82-minute match and will face top-seeded Lebanese Richard Gasquet in the championship match. Gasquet beat Croatian Ivo Karlovic 7-6, 6-4 in the other semifinal. AFP

Sharapova grabs title

SAN DIEGO—TOP SEED MARIA SHARAPOVA won her first title of the year by beating Patty Schnyder, 6-2, 3-6, 6-4, in the San Diego Classic final on Sunday.

Sharapova, a powerful baseline attack to break the left-handed Swiss six times amid a flurry of 37 winners, but she did not have things all her own way.

After Sharapova closed out the first set by tipping a backhand down the line, the 11th-seeded Schnyder cleverly began to move the 6-foot-2 Russian around the court.

She broke to 5-3 in the second set when Sharapova missed a forehand and leveled the match within a 3-16-eight-error winners.

Between sets, Sharapova's coach Michael Joyce told her to stop being so tentative and she came out roaring to the third set, breaking Schnyder to 2-0 when the Swiss retired on a drop shot.

It was the world No. 2 Sharapova's first title since winning the Line tile in October. Reuters

Diaz camp wants fight vs Pacman

DIAZ

HOUSTON, TEXAS—Erik Morales touched two reluctances. WBC lightweight champion Diaz cannot his attention toward the future.

Morales made Diaz early every penny of his $350,000 purse Saturday but the 30-year-old called it a career after soaring up about to his kid to become the first Mexican to win a world title in four weight classes. Diaz stress thriller by unanimous decision and extended his status as champion of the opening day belt when the NBC are tipped Joel Casamayor.

Now, he wants a $1 million payday.

"I think we deserve a payday," Diaz said after his first title defense. "Hopefully, we can get it."

Diaz's first choice would be to unify the 135-pound title. WBO and IBF lightweight champion Juan Diaz and IBF champ Julio Diaz are scheduled to meet in October, and Daniel Diaz's first choice would be to fight either Diaz brother. Jim Brickland, also thinks a big paycheck would come from fighting WBC super featherweight champ Manny Pacquiao.

"Pacquiao would be the one that would pay that," Brickland said. "That would be my choice of a fight. And with those two guys going at each other like billy goats, that ... would give the Diaz another fight just like we saw Morales last night."

Morales and Diaz were right at each other. Monday 146-0 knocked Diaz down in the first round. Diaz (33, 1 1) returned the favor in the second, and they punished each other the rest of the way. AP

7-6 Yao marries 6-2 Ye

BEIJING—NBA STAR YAO MING is getting married at an exclusive Shanghai hotel Monday in front of 100 relatives, with an equal number of security guards expected to work the event, media reported.

After the ceremony and dinner at the five-star Shangri-La Hotel, the newlyweds and their guests will cruise the Huangpu River in a luxury houseboat, the Yeast sports newspaper reported. The wedding cost more than 1 million yuan ($130,000), media said.

No teammates, coaches or basketball officials will be at the nuptials, the Beijing Morning Post reported. However, 300 security guards would be on hand.

The 7-foot-6 (2.29-meter) Houston Rockets center and his bride, Ye Li, received their official marriage certificate on Friday. Widely circulated photographs showed the couple in tuxedo and off-the-shoulder gown having their wedding portraits made on a scenic ranch in eastern China last week.

Ye, who is 1.9 meters tall (6-foot-2), is a player on China's national women's basketball team.

Yao's reported that the end his bride will go to Beijing on Saturday to begin their honeymoon celebrating the one-year mark until the opening of the Beijing Olympic Games.

While in Beijing, the couple will host a dinner for members of China's men's and women's basketball teams, the Oriental Morning Post reported. AP

YAO Ming and his fiancee Ye Li make their wedding vows.

BUSINESS

John Nauth Manuelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
Send us your feedback

RP, other Asian stocks continue to slide

Only China equity market bucking US-led decline

AT A GLANCE

- Singapore's benchmark Straits Times Index shed 0.7 percent to 3,004.28 points.
- The JSX Index in Jakarta was down 4.03 percent at 2,178.23 points in mid-trade.
- Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng Index fell 2.1 percent to 21,833.1 points in morning trade.
- The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index added 1.4 percent in the morning.

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lazaro

LOCAL SHARE PRICES STAGGERED TO A NEW three-month low over Wall Street's 280-point slide Friday on growing credit fears, a dismal jobs picture and a slowing service sector, analysts said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index fell 95.21 points or 2.84 percent to 3,256.99. This was the index's lowest close since April 20 when it stood at 3,254.76.

All indices ended in red territory, with the broader all shares index declining 60.79 points or 2.96 percent to 2,086.50.

Declines (red) gains 103 to 19, with 61 unchanged.

Total value of trades amounted to P4.06 billion with 5.5 billion shares changing hands.

Foreign investors were net sellers as foreign selling reached P3.3 billion against foreign buying of P2.9 billion.

"Funds are now staying away from smaller markets since they have become more risk averse. When the dust settles and they see that the economy is healthy then they will come back," said Consuelo Ibez, president at Citimarket.com.

He said foreign investors make up almost half of trading volume in the Philippines, making the local market vulnerable to shakeouts in global markets.

"The current global risk aversion among investors will affect appetite

BB, B2

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- **End to subsidies given** to airlines sought /B5
- **UMC eyes lead** in pick-up mart /B6

HSBC to open 2nd BPO hub in UP Diliman

By Doris C. Dumlao

HSBC BANKING GIANT HSBC is expanding its call center operations in the Philippines with the opening of a second fault-tolerant servicing hub in UP Diliman, Quezon City, before the year ends.

The opening of the second Philippine business process outsourcing facility will bring the number of employees of HSBC Electronic Data Processing (Philippines) Inc. to nearly 6,000 from about 5,500 at present, HSBC Philippines CEO Mark Wickham said in an interview.

He said HSBC was building the facility on a property in UP North Science and Technology Park along Commonwealth Ave. leased from developer Ayala Land Inc.

"Construction has started. We will open in phases," he said.

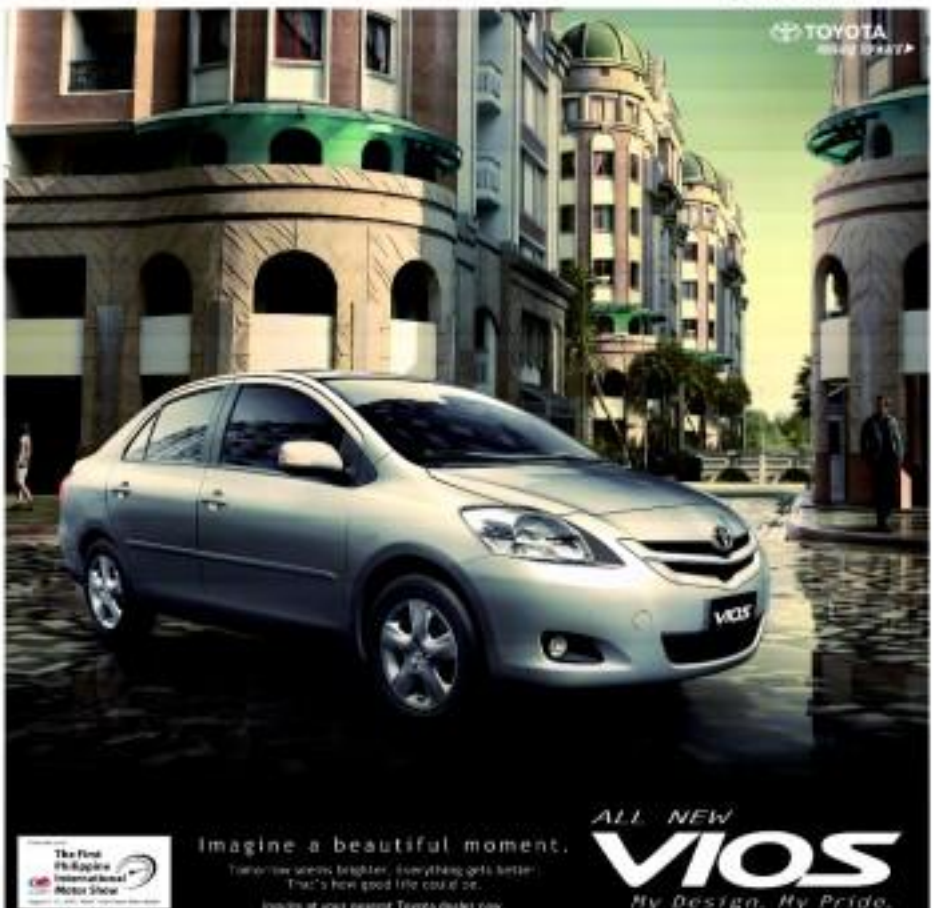
Wickham said the new facility in UP Diliman would cater to offshore clients from the United States and the United Kingdom.

In 2005, HSBC inaugurated a 141,000-square-foot, five-story building complex in Alabang. With a capacity of 2,000 seats, it was a permanent site for HSBC's eighth global service center after those located in mainland China, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

The Alabang facility offers a range of facilities for the staff, including state-of-the-art training rooms, leisure suites, relaxation areas and a 24-hour, 5,000-seat dining facility.

Since it started its call center operations in the country, HSBC has been very happy with locally hired staff, who have rewarded expectations in delivering "world-class standards of service and customer care."

Based on government estimates, the average investment for call centers in the Philippines ranges between $1,000 and $6,000 per seat.



Power cries

JUST TWO WEEKS AGO, THEN energy president Carl-Jed Collar cried out loud that we must hone for power outages—i.e. 'oh, no, those production-wrecking brownouts again.'

Who would have thought then that Jed Collar was calling an early half-truth?

The power shortage was in the whole of Luzon, which hasn't roughly well, only some of the country's power-starved manufacturing plants.

And the shortage, according to Jed Collar, was due to the low level of water in the hydroelectric plants of the state-owned Napocor.

That of course was realistically. This newspaper showed actual photos of the water level on the August dam, for instance.

That's why business had a big surprise when just the following day Jed Collar announced that he already solved the 'mini' power crisis.

And so what did he do? Did he solve the water shortage overnight? The last time I checked, Jed Collar was not yet god, was he?

***

But of course, Charlie, our hero; Jed Collar hid from us the other reasons for the temporary power shortage.

Two weeks ago, based on official documents issued by Transco, the Luzon power grid suffered from the "shutdown" of power-generating plants equivalent to some 3,000 megawatts.

Some 412 megawatts of those were due to the low water elevation at the dams, namely, Angat, Binga, Caliraya, Calirayan Hydroelectric and San Roque.

Actually, those were other reasons, which Del Collar neverthe- less forgot to tell us, plus of course his boss, who is none other than the Lola at the Palace.

Here is one: Some major power plants were shut for "planned maintenance shutdowns" at that time namely, Pagbilao Unit 1, Limay, Ilijan, Sual and Ilijan.

Together they accounted for some 1,620 megawatts of unavailable power to the Luzon grid, which is quite a sizeable shortage.

Here is another one: Fuel shortage. The power plants called Malaya and Sual did not have enough coal, and they accounted for some 1,310 megawatts of the power generation "shutdown."

I mean, sure, Napocor could not have done anything about the low water level of the dams.

But if those power plants (1,620 MW) were scheduled to undergo maintenance shutdown, how come two other plants (1,130 MW) did not have enough fuel?

Isn't that, you're thinking, what Jed Collar is for, to ensure that there is enough fuel?

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***

Under the so-called Grid Code, which is part of the energy sector reform law called Epira, the government-owned power transmission company Transco-cum-is in a "red alert" if, for instance, the Luzon grid gets into a situation where it has zero system reserves.

That means that—since two weeks ago—2380 reserves!

Yet nobody else knew about the situation except Transco, Napocor, the Department of Energy and Meralco.

Under the Grid Code, in a "red alert" situation, Transco must notify ALL grid users. It actually means "ALL!"

It seems that our big shots in the electricity sector have this habit of disregarding the rules.

Under the Grid Code, we got rid of an important provision in the Epira, requiring Napocor to sell at least 70 percent of its power plants.

They already convinced the Lola at the Palace to support their move to amend the Epira.

***

A group known as the Philippine Independent Power producers Association (Pipa) threatened Lola GMA against the move to change Epira.

Changing it means Lolas Napocor will remain the dominant player in the power sector, which the Epira presently intends to change.

Napocor's monopolistic set-up does not enhance competition.

I mean, really, if you want to compete against a state-owned company that enjoys subsidies (i.e. through your tax payments, plus huge borrowings) to cover for its massive losses, you must be crazy.

And now the Napocor mafia is pushing for the "retail open access," which allows Napocor to go directly to factories and such, in effect competing with everybody else but the factories.

And this is the game that will dominate the industry—thanks mainly to the support of Lola GMA for the Napocor mafia's scheming against the Epira.

No wonder in the recent bidding for the Ilijan power plant, the foreign groups insisted on a "retroactive clause" in the rules.

That, in effect, would prevent Napocor from evading the customers of Meralco after the privatization.

***

Word is now going around in business about some "grand scheme" that may have been cooked up by Napocor's Spanish consultants to circumvent the Epira.

Stay tuned.

BREAKTIME

Corazon S. Bacani III

READY, SET, LAUNCH. President Macapagal-Arroyo presses the ceremonial button to launch the first-ever delivery sites of eVillages Global Solutions in Alabang, Cebu City and Mandaluyong City. With her are (from left) Fred Ayala, eVillages chair; Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila and John Harris, eVillages president and CEO.

Mactan airport plans expansion of terminals

Increasing visitor arrivals prompts addition

By Irene R. Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE MACTAN Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA) plans to expand its terminal facilities to service the increasing number of tourist arrivals to the island.

"Right now, we are about close to the capacity of the international terminal ... of 3,000,000 passengers a year," said Danilo Ingjares Francia, MCIA general manager.

For the first half of 2007, the airport registered over 224,000 international arrivals and over 230,000 international departures, exceeding the target for the period.

Because of this, Francia said, the MCIAA board had decided to expand the terminal building.

The plans involves the conversion of two departure lounges and the purchase of two more loading bridges, he said.

The proposed expansion is estimated to cost P300 million.

While the airport can accommodate five loading bridges through its Satellite Terminal, Francia said that the MCIAA will have to secure its financing for the two departure lounges from government financial institutions.

The board has discussed long-term plans for the airport, including the construction of an entire terminal building, probably near the most important person (MCP) lounge, he said.

Another plan is to have a separate cargo terminal.

The MCIAA will conduct a bidding for the cargo terminal project as it can get the best deal, he said.

It will be implemented under a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme, he added.

The winning company will still be required to pay taxes and concessionaire fees, Francia said.

Bidding for the expansion of the terminal building will be done after the original awardees of the project submits its cost plans.

SECURE YOUR OFFICE FROM THEFTS AND FRAUDS

Cebu-Shanghai flights seen luring more Chinese tourists

CEBU CITY—THE START OF regular charter flights between Cebu and Shanghai is expected to attract more Chinese tourists to this island.

Shanghai tourism attaché Gerard Pang called the China Southern Airlines' inaugural Shanghai-Cebu flight, which landed in Cebu late last month, a breakthrough for Cebu's tourism industry.

Shanghai is one of the three most economically developed regions in China, together with Beijing and Guangzhou, and considered a major source of tourists.

The crew of the 180-seat tourists who arrived on board the China Southern Airlines chartered flight also went to Bohol for a brief tour.

Philippine Consul General to Shanghai Jesus Tinio, who accompanied the Chinese tourists, said the three-hour direct flight would make Cebu more attractive to the Shanghai people. It would also boost travel time.

The tourists will no longer have to stay overnight in Manila before going down to Cebu.

"With the direct flight from Shanghai, the number of tourist could have more than to spend in Cebu," he added.

Tinio also urged Cebu to enhance its facilities and tourist attractions to make it more attractive to the Chinese market.

China is a very attractive market because according to the World Tourism Organization, Chinese outbound tourists will reach 100 million by 2020.

The top destinations of Chinese tourists are Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, Singapore and Malaysia.

Tabes said the Philippines could not yet qualify as one of the top destinations since the country still lacks accommodations.

But just getting 300,000 Chinese tourists would boost the local economy, he added.

Nieva Ramos, regional director of the Department of Tourism, lauded the construction of another terminal building, probably near the most important person (MCP) lounge, he said.

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RP, other Asian stocks ...

Private paginfol

for emerging market assets, but see views that as a healthy correction and a buying opportunity for investors. We expect some volatility in equity markets for the next couple of months," said Raul Joseph Concio, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management Philippines and president of the Fund Managers Association of the Philippines.

"Investors are in the dark about the magnitude of the US housing loans concerns. If you do not know what you are up against, it's better to sell and take time to assess the situation," Jose Mario of AB Capital Securities added.

Ruiz Rodriguez of Unicapital Investment Corp. says the news is clearly jittery. It seems their views have moved from being optimistic to volatile."

Rodrigo said apart from the weakness in stock markets globally, domestic concerns were also affecting investors' bias. "Investors are worried that the government's difficulty in increasing its tax collections to allow it to keep the 2007 budget deficit within the target ceiling.

"The market is looking to the 12% market for positive leads and it is not showing any signs for forthcoming anytime soon," said Gustavo Tan of Virginia Capital Development Corp.

Most Asian stock markets ended the week lower.

Stocks in Indonesia and Singapore shed more than 3 percent by midday, while share prices in Hong Kong, Thailand and India were all down by around 2 percent.

Chinese stocks meanwhile dragged all the Asia-Pacific region's gains as bullish forecasts for steel makers. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index added 1.4 percent in the morning.

"The market is in a rush down yesterday as a result of risk appetite over the past two to three weeks playing out right now," said Stefan Worrall, vice president of equity sales at Credit Suisse.

Last week's slides have prompted investors to close the 16% housing loan problems could drag on the US economy, a key export market, and cause investors to pull out of Asian stocks.

The Wall Street worries sent Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng Index down to 4.4% to settle 2.7 percent to 21,932.1 points, with most blue chip stocks falling.

Singapore's benchmark Straits Times Index shed 3.7 percent to 3,366.28 points.

The Dow fell 2.09 percent to 13,301.91, so has been ripped in recent sell-offs, much of the decline came late in the session.

AFP, AP

Gov't asked to junk market access proposals

WTO's Nama talks to cover industrial, manufactured goods

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A FILIPINO ADVOCACY group has asked the government to reject proposals on non-agricultural market access under the World Trade Organization's Doha negotiations, saying this would deepen the crisis of "deindustrialization."

The Nama negotiations cover all industrial and manufactured products as well as other products not included in the agriculture negotiations, such as fishery, forestry and mineral products.

Antonio Tandoc III, executive director of Tandoyong Development Center, said the Nama proposals were "grossly inconsistent" with the Doha principles of less than full reciprocity (LTFR) and special and differential treatment (SDT) and proportionality for developing countries on issues like tariff reduction and market access.

Tandoding said the formula currently on the table would result in tariff cuts of more than 60 percent in the developing countries' average tariff levels.

"These figures make a mockery of LTFR and SDT which were enshrined in the Doha round of the WTO negotiations supposedly to address the developmental issues of poor countries," he said.

He said poor countries would remain underutilized and may even slide to more backward status while rich countries would continue to prosper.

Tandoding said the situation was measured by the "lack of proportionality between the forms and agriculture negotiations in the WTO."

"The developed countries are not conceding an inch of market access in agriculture to compensate for what the developing countries would be giving them under Nama," he said.

"Moreover, they have refused to make any significant cuts in trade distorting subsidies and ignored the issue of non-tariff barriers, both of which have hindered agriculture exports from developing countries," he added.

Tandoding said the Philippine government should learn from the negative results of its unilateral liberalization program which was adopted in the late 1980s after the Uruguay round of the WTO.

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Filinvest gets board nod on sale of 3.5B shares

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FILINVEST DEVELOPMENT CORP. (FDC) yesterday said it has secured board approval to raise funds with the sale of up to 3.5 billion common shares.

Details of how much will be raised from this exercise have yet to be revealed.

FDC said it would sell shares through a primary (new shares) and secondary (from existing shareholders) offering.

FDC added that it would also include an option to offer convertible bonds to other parties.

"The corporation is currently evaluating its options regarding any potential fund-raising activity, including the timing of such fund-raising and the feasibility of the bond formation," FDC corporate information officer Abner Gutter Jr. said in a disclosure yesterday.

To ratify the move, FDC will hold a special meeting of stockholders on Sept. 7.

Proceeds to finance diversification

FDC had said it was dipping its hands into the manufacturing business with the acquisition of 1.08 percent of management company Pacific Sugar Holdings Corp. for roughly P10.76 billion, from Andrew L. Tan-executive (AAA) Holdings Corp., the owner of Pacific Sugar and the private holding firm of the property magnate.

In an earlier disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FDC said its board approved the agreement with AAT subscribe FDC will issue 1.35 billion shares to AAA. The value of the shares is pegged at P1.8 billion.

AAA is the parent firm of FDC owning some 79.52 percent. FDC has interests in property development and banking.

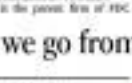
With the acquisitions, FDC hopes to broaden its revenue base, sources said.

Pacific Sugar owns sugar milling and refinery companies Carabao Sugar Central Co. Inc. and Davao Sugar Central Co. Inc. and sugar planting firm High Yield Sugar Farms Corp.

The valuation of Pacific Sugar's operations was performed by Manabat Sanagustin & Co., a member of the group led by auditing firm SGV&.

In year of the deal, AAA will receive 1.35 billion FDC shares, translating to an effective price of P10.76 billion or a discount of 38.8 percent to the independent valuation of the three companies. The price also represented a -94.5-percent premium over FDC's 15-day volume weighted average price from June 7 to 29 at P6.92 a share.

Where do we go from here?



I PROMISED MY WIFE THAT I would not write any more jokes about her but I must tell you about the day we were married. I could not marry in church because at 65, I was no longer a virgin so the ceremony was performed by a judge. He asked my fiancée, "Do you take this man for your lawful wedded husband?" and replied "Yes please." There he asked me if I took my fiancée to be my lawful wedded wife and she said, "He does."

* * *

After the 386-point decline in the DOW and an even greater percentage decline in the Nasdaq, Monday had to be another bloodbath and those my perfectly timed overlong 2 weeks ago of what was about to happen, the PSEi has dropped from 3800 to 3237. I maintained my positions in AT and IPVG but I am largely in cash. I am receiving 30 e-mails a day from readers of the buy zero ink.

Many shed real fill percent cash some of the second and third losers they bought a month ago and I asked them whether they read my previous 2 bearish articles. I am going to stop answering these e-mails as it is too late to give advice and anyway, I don't follow these stocks.

Tuesday should be a bottom for the PSEi as the FED is meeting on Tuesday night, which is Wednesday local time. I think BERNANKE will try his best to reassure investors that the problems of the subprime mortgages represent a fraction of the total economy so its effect should not be exaggerated. There have been casualties like BEAR STEARNS, and to a lesser extent the other brokerage houses, and there will be more to come but the US economy has proved to be extremely resilient to the past. It survived the 9/11 attack, climbs in prompt action by GREENSPAN, and it recovered from the tech stock meltdown in 2000.

The latest data will not displease BERNANKE, as the creation of 92,000 jobs in July is still positive even if it is below the 120,000 anticipated by economists. The core deflator for people like me, who live on bottom and walk to work, rose only 0.1 percent, a hopeful sign that inflation may be moderating. Personal income rose 0.4 percent while consumer spending increased only 0.2 percent due to higher petrol prices and mortgage rates. The decline in the job figures did not upset traders unduly and the DOW was only down 11 points after the figures.

What caused the selloff was an announcement by BEAR STEARNS that it was calling in investors' conference. Their FO invested could float the recent turmoil in the bond market was as bad as it had been in 22 years. This sent the bailout plunging nonstop until the close and there have been declines of nearly 20 percent in Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and Lehman Brothers.

American Home Mortgage closed its door, laid off 7,000 workers and cut off credit to the mortgage lenders. It is those credit worries that fueled the meltdown.

Signs of tougher conditions in credit markets have rattled investors around the world, since regulators in Australia said they would tighten the rules on the sale of borrowing for companies, leaving corporate earnings in the year ahead. This will undoubtedly slow the buyout boom, reduce mergers and acquisitions and put the lid on IPOs. Well known fund manager Jim Rogers appeared on Bloomberg and reported that in the recent years, people had been buying houses without a down payment. In some cases, he said, the bankers had paid the down payment in order to get the contract. If this story is true, then the buyer was in a weak financial position to begin with and had to cope with a 100-percent mortgage, payable on maturity plus interest.

A similar situation happened here in 1997. My clients at MS were making 3, even 10, conversions on a property due to be completed in 3 years. The conversion list was only P50,000 and they expected the condominium to be worth a value by P1 million or more when completed. On the day of the turnover, only about 30 percent of genuine buyers turned up and all the rest forfeited their deposits leaving a lot of unsold condos. It took years for the properties to recover their value.

Nowadays, this cannot happen. If you buy from ALL MDL, FLI or any reputable builder, you either have to put down a 20- to 20-percent deposit during the pre-selling stage or your house will be commenced immediately while the property is being constructed. By the time you move in, you would have paid a substantial part of the price. With property values rising, developers are in no danger of losing out and buyers are unlikely to default.

To summarize, the US market moments is good shape and will probably grow by 2.5 percent this year and next. This is in line with the growth rates in Europe, the UK, Japan and other 1st world economies. 3 percent to 3.5 percent is the ideal growth rate because anything above 4 percent will give rise to inflation. Of course, this does not apply to Third World countries, which may from a much lower base. So we have China growing at 11.9 percent, India 9 percent and Russia 7 percent. The IMF has revised its target for global growth this year from 4.9 percent to 5.2 percent. This is not a recipe for a global recession.

Since nonsense investors are by nature bipolar, jumping from euphoria to insane depression and back in 48 hours, we can expect Wall Street to remain volatile and unfortunately, the rest of the world will play follow the leader. So the volatility is here to stay, aggravated by short selling by the hedge funds. Investors will gradually learn to live with the volatility and sentiment will turn.

There is a big difference between resistance and support levels. There will always be resistance when there is no such thing as a market that is so good that nobody will take a profit. But in a panda market (short panderement), support levels evaporate as everyone runs for the exit.

I think the decline in mining stocks has been overdone because they are not highly leveraged with subprime mortgages but rely on demand from China and there is no sign of China ever pausing for breath.

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Otto Energy revises drilling program

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HAS approved the revised exploration work programs of Australia-based Otto Energy Ltd., giving the firm until March 2008 and August 2009 to drill the first wells in its three service contracts.

According to the company's quarterly report, the first well in Service Contracts 38 and 51 is due in March 2008, while that in SC 55 should be drilled by August 2009.

"Some members, Otto Energy said, were in line with recent developments in the company's overall exploration program, particularly the completion of 3D seismic programs over the three contract areas.

"The next step in the exploration process is to conduct an extensive environmental survey in the Cebu-Bohol Straits to prepare for drilling the Argao prospect in 2008," the company said.

The Argao prospect is found within SC 51 to the East Visayan Basin.

The listed oil program, the firm is raising $11.02 million through issuance of additional 36.73 million shares.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE
As of August 6, 2007

Company	Stock	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
MAIN						
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Long Distance Tel. Co.	TEL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Robinsons Land Corporation	RLC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
San Miguel Corporation	SMC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Universal Robina Corp.	URC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
FINANCIAL						
ABS-CBN Holdings Corporation	ABS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
China Banking Corporation	CBC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Equitable PCI Bank	EPCIB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
INDUSTRIAL						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
MINING						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
OIL						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PROPERTY						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
SERVICES						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
HOLDING FIRMS						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PHILIPPINE DEPOSITORY RECEIPTS						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PREFERRED						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
WARRANTS						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE
As of August 6, 2007

Company	Stock	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
MAIN						
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Long Distance Tel. Co.	TEL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Robinsons Land Corporation	RLC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
San Miguel Corporation	SMC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Universal Robina Corp.	URC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
FINANCIAL						
ABS-CBN Holdings Corporation	ABS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
China Banking Corporation	CBC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Equitable PCI Bank	EPCIB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
INDUSTRIAL						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
MINING						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
OIL						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PROPERTY						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
SERVICES						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
HOLDING FIRMS						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PHILIPPINE DEPOSITORY RECEIPTS						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PREFERRED						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
WARRANTS						
Alaska Milk Corporation	ALAKOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Savings Bank	PSB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	RCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Security Bank Corp.	SB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE
As of August 6, 2007

Company	Stock	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
MAIN						
Ayala Corporation	AC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ayala Land, Inc.	ALI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	MBT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine Long Distance Tel. Co.	TEL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Philippine National Bank	PNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Robinsons Land Corporation	RLC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
San Miguel Corporation	SMC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Universal Robina Corp.	URC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
FINANCIAL						
ABS-CBN Holdings Corporation	ABS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc.	BDO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
China Banking Corporation	CBC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Equitable PCI Bank	EPCIB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Metropolitan B

Declining debt-to-GDP ratio seen

Key factors include low interest rates, strong peso

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT's debt as a percentage of the country's gross domestic product is closely monitored indicator of credit-worthiness, so measures to contain its deterioration over the medium term despite recent tax collection issues.

According to a think tank, the low interest rate environment, the appreciation of the peso and improved revenue growth of the economy will lead to the decline in the debt-to-GDP ratio this year and in the following years until 2010.

New York-based global investor said in a research paper titled "The Philippines: Is the Bankruptcy Bogey?" that a decline in the debt-to-GDP ratio would be seen, although at a rate slower than what has been targeted, despite the revenue shortfall in the first six months.

Total revenues for the year (and next) is important in establishing the government's credibility. The projected ratios should not trigger alarm bells especially if investors question diminishing revenue vs. piling recently identified loopholes," Global Source said in the paper written by former Finance Undersecretary Romeo Bernardo and Maria Christine Tang.

Debt-to-GDP ratio measures how much of the economy's output would be spent to service the country's debts if there were to be paid at once. Reducing the ratio requires either a cut in the debt (which foregoing the output consumed) or an increase in the output at a rate faster than the growth of debts.

The country's debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 71.6 percent in 2006. This improved to 64.2 percent in 2006. The government is targeting to reduce the figure to 58.3 percent this year and hit international standards in the coming years.

The government hopes to achieve its debt-to-GDP ratio target by increasing total revenues to P1.926 trillion or before and registering at least P6.276 trillion in GDP.

Finance officials said the country should reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio to 50 percent or lower for the country to be "investable" by credit rating firms.

The appreciation of the peso helps trim the country's foreign-currency denominated debts, reducing the total debt figure, while lower interest rates slow down the increase in the outstanding debt.

The peso remains within the 40-to-41 level, compare from the 46-to-51 to-41 average cash as monitored by finance officials.

GLOBE, INNOVE AMONG TOP TAXPAYERS: Globe Telecom treasury head Alberto M. De Larrazabal (right) receives from Finance Secretary Margarita Teves a plaque of recognition given to Globe and subsidiary Innove Communications. The two companies were cited as among the country's top taxpayers for 2006 during the 103rd anniversary of the Bureau of Internal Revenue on Aug. 1.

GOINGS-ON

BancNet's cop-up rollout

BANCNET, THE COUNTRY'S LEADING ATM-only network provider, is the first to launch mobile top-up rollouts for Smart, Globe and Sun mobile subscribers via its electronic channels. BancNet cardholders can now reload as low as P20 using their mobile phone. The service will also become available at selected ATMs. Through its Internet banking portal, participating POS terminals around the Philippines, BancNet has 2.5 million banks with over 4.2 million ATM card holders, and 2,700 bank ATMs 2947 nationwide. Smart Prepaid Technology (SPT) is BancNet's exclusive technology provider.

Manila-Batelec I deal

CONTACTEL MANILA INC., PROJECT DEVELOPER OF Manila Coast, recently inked a memorandum of agreement with Batelec 1, an electric cooperative in Batangas, Batangas. The MOA covers the construction of a 10-KM transmission line that will provide efficient and reliable power service to Pico de Loro Cove, the first of the several projects within Manila Coast.

The country's first integrated network of coastal resort communities, Manila Coast, is an ecozonism project of P&J Investments Corp.

Plasencobank campaign bags award

PLASENCIA DEVELOPMENT BANK RECEIVED the MKGA silver trophy for best budget service campaign in the recent 2nd Integrated Marketing Communications Effectiveness Awards (IMCEA). The award was in recognition of the bank's advocacy called SME Community Program, a multimedia campaign to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship among Filipinos and honor SMEs that have contributed to job creation, foreign exchange generation and overall economic growth.

JOB-SKILL MATCHING EFFORTS

Accenture ropes in MIT for training program

By Rica T. Chichioco

OUTSOURCING SERVICE COMPANY Accenture is working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on a training program that will be implemented in its Philippine offices.

Just last week, Accenture announced its operations in the country with the opening of its IT services center in Cebu to complement its Manila operations.

"The MIT will assemble our courseware for the ecosystem Solutions Development Academy. It will help IT graduates become IT professionals through training in processes that the industry actually needs," Keith Haviland, head of delivery services network for technology at Accenture, said in a briefing.

The program is scheduled for implementation within the next two years, Haviland said.

Beth Lui, country managing director of Accenture Manila, said the company's Cebu facility (annex) part of a strategy of finding more professionals outside of Metro Manila.

Lui said Accenture would replicate in Cebu its practice of coordinating with Metro Manila-based universities for the training of graduating students so they would be ready to work in the outsourcing industry. "One of the reasons we are going outside Manila is the saturation of the market there. Cebu is capable of providing us the talent pool we need," Lui said.

The Cebu facility will initially have 500 seats for software development and engineers providing applications, infrastructure, and remote management services.

These are high-value offerings, unlike traditional call center services.

Accenture officials declined to disclose the amount invested in the new facility. The Metro Manila and Cebu facilities are expected to grow Accenture's Filipino workforce from the current 12,000 to 40,000 by the end of the year.

Accenture launched its first delivery center in Manila in 1993 and has since opened nine other facilities in key areas in Metro Manila, including Makati, Mandaluyong, Pasig and Quezon City.

Accenture Philippines was recently named ISPO Company of the Year in the International ICT Awards.

UnionBank H1 profit doubles to ₱2.16B

UNION BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES posted a record net income of P2.16 billion in the first half of 2007, 103.7 percent higher than year-ago's P1.06 billion.

In a statement, the bank said higher investment across loan portfolio contributed to the growth.

It said interest differential income grew by 86.6 percent, while fees and commissions increased by 98.8 percent. Trading gains also rose by 44.9 percent.

With the recent acquisition of the majority growth, UnionBank's total assets expanded by 87.6 percent to P281.9 billion in June 2007 from P 97.6 billion in the same month last year. Loan portfolio increased by 157.9 percent to P97.6 billion while deposits jumped by 166.9 percent to P145.2 billion.

UnionBank's capitalization rose by 31.7 percent to P26.7 billion due to strong internal capital generation and proceeds from the recently-concluded follow-on equity offering. Capital adequacy ratio improved to 23.4 percent in June.

UnionBank has already completed its full system integration. The three branches are now linked into the Unionbank Bank system, allowing both Unionbank and Bank clients to transact in 186 branches nationwide, free of charge on deposit and withdrawal transactions.

Nihao reports positive assay results in Botolan

NIHAO MINERAL RESOURCES International Inc., in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, said its latest mining assessment in Barangay Alwibuan, Botolan has shown positive results of prospective nickel reserves.

Nihao has a total of 7,202 hectares in Botolan and Iba. The first 600 hectares are now being explored.

Of the initial explorations, a 186-hectare zone has already been delineated to contain nickeliferous and saprolite material with 0.8 percent to 2.0 percent nickel based on contiguous surface. Mines closely spaced core drilling is now being conducted in the most promising area to delineate minable ore reserve.

Exploration plans for another 700 hectares is now being carried out.

According to Edwin Mesiadlo, senior geologist of Nihao, the company is bullish on the prospects found in Zambales because of the same results and the initial findings from the area.

"For future prospects, there is a need to block in on ore reserve for evaluations alone development," said company senior geologist Edwin Mesiadlo.

Forum Energy seeks service contract, says all DOE requirements already met

By Abigail L. Ho

CITING INADEQUATE TECHNICAL and financial capability, the Department of Energy continues to refuse to convert Inex a service contract for South Tara to Sea geophysical survey and exploration contract (SSEC) held by United Kingdom based Forum Energy Plc.

Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Balce said the company had yet to submit the DOE a complete work program that could show the firm's technical and financial capability to undertake the project.

"We're looking at the capability of Forum. We can't issue an SSEC unless we're satisfied that they can really do the job. The problem is really the financing. They have to show us that they have at least $300 million, which is the cost of drilling one well," he said.

"If Forum fulfills all the requirements and demonstrates the capability to undertake the project, then we'll endorse the conversion of the GSEC to a service contract," he added.

In a separate interview yesterday, Energy Undersecretary Giovanni Carp, president Jose Raymund Apostol said that contrary to Balce's statements, the company had submitted all documents required of it as early as September last year.

"We're working that the DOE asked us to submit we already submitted. We've already raised more than $30 million for our Philippine exploration work as they said, are we don't have the money," he said.

He added that Forum had more than enough technical capability to see the project through, should the DOE finally decide to convert its GSEC 101 into a service contract.

"We've already spent more than $5 million on the GSEC, and we're now ready to undertake some serious work. But without the service contract, we can't proceed. We're just waiting for what the government is going to say. But if the service contract is not awarded to us, we definitely won't be taking it sitting down," he said, adding that the company would likely pursue legal action against the DOE.

He said the main reason that the DOE continued to refuse to give Forum the service contract was the tripartite scientific study appointed that Philippine National Oil Co. had with the China National Offshore Oil Co. and Vietnam Oil and Gas Corp.

The area covered by the tripartite agreement, he related, overlapped with some parts of the GSEC 101 area.

"This was the main reason why other, not one lack of technical and financial capability," he said.

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5.0MM - 9.99MM	4.25	4.50
10.0MM and up	4.50	4.75

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End to subsidies given to airlines sought

By Rica T. Chichioco

FLAG CARRIER PHILIPPINE Airlines said that if the Asean wanted to liberalize the airline industry to encourage tourism growth, governments must first cut all subsidies and levies given to state-owned carriers.

Asean member-countries agreed in 2004 to adopt an open-skies policy in the region beginning with unlimited flights between Asean capital cities by December 2008.

PAL vice president for marketing support Felix J. Cruz said PAL was ready to compete in such an environment but there should be equal opportunity for all in an "open skies" regime.

Asean flag carriers, except for PAL, are either fully or partially owned or subsidized by their governments. The regional blue includes the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vietnam and Cambodia.

PAL is the only subsidy-free regional carrier. It has been operating in the black for the last six years.

Cruz said that in contrast, PAL achieved a solid track of profitability without any subsidies from the national government.

PAL reported a record profit of $143.1 million for fiscal year 2006-2007, the company's third profitable year in a row. This prompted the airline to apply for an exit loan restructuring from the Securities and Exchange Commission by the end of this year.

Cruz said PAL had submitted its application to the Philippine government which was hoped to process it as other loans governments in ongoing regional and multilateral air traffic rights negotiations.

The flag carrier also expressed sympathy for budget carrier Cebu Pacific, which was recently refused new flights from Clark to Hong Kong, Bangkok and Macau. The reason given was the lack of entitlements, even as airlines from these countries continue to operate freely in Clark.

Rhu Sycuip-B. Limanga, senior assistant vice president for external affairs, told the business in a separate interview that the government should adopt a policy of equal opportunity instead of the current regime.

"Local airlines actually don't have a problem with open skies as long as the opportunity is open for everyone, not just the foreign carriers. We have said the time and again, and the CAB (Civil Aeronautics Board) knows that, that local carriers are not getting the same opportunities as foreign carriers," Limanga said.

She said DOC and other aviation stakeholders in the country understand that foreign airlines play a role in the country's tourism development.

BUSINESS

DA intensifies hog vaccination program

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has stepped up the pace of its hog vaccination campaign in Luzon as part of efforts to secure a foot-and-mouth disease-free certification from the Paris-based Animal Health Organization.

Bureau of Animal Industry Director Candido Carbagnet said the BAI had recently distributed 57,000 vaccines to keep Metro Manila, Central Luzon and the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon FMD-free.

BAI told the DA it would file the application before the AHO in January next year.

The application will be deliberated on by the organization on the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) when it convenes for a general assembly in May 2008.

As early as 2005, Carbagnet said the OIE had already "recognized," but not "declared," Mindanao, Visayas, Palawan and Masbate as FMD-free zones.

This recognition has allowed pork exports from these areas to be exported, but still subject to the other requirements set by the importing countries.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap had said that a declaration, instead of a mere recognition by the OIE that the Philippines is totally FMD-free, would give a tremendous boost to Philippine exports of processed pork.

Yap added that the certification could likewise lower production costs for the local hog industry, given the swap cost of anti-FMD vaccines and other related expenses needed to maintain ideal herd health.

He said that if the country can keep its FMD-free status for good, government resources can be used to control other diseases that threaten animal and human health.

Carbagnet hailing fiscal and the Bilusaksa provincial (Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) were declared by the DA as FMD-free areas back in 2004.

Carbagnet added that the Gloria Administration began achieved its local FMD free-zone status without vaccination in 2006, while the Bicol Region was declared a FMD-free zone with vaccination in 2005.

Carbagnet also said that the recent hog cholera outbreak would not affect the Philippines' application for FMD-free status.

He said the feared disease had been confined to only a few backyard farms in Bulacan and Pampanga, and was contained in about a week.

Automotive firm launches more innovations

UMC eyes lead in pick-up mart

By Bernard W. Dorotheo

UNIVERSAL MOTORS CORP. YESTERDAY made a gambit to recapture the lead in the pick-up segment as it launches more innovations in light commercial vehicles.

Elizabeth H. Lee, UMC senior vice president, said a new generation Nissan Frontier, called Navara—would be the first pick-up in the local market to have a six-speed manual transmission.

"We are banking on our tradition of 'firsts' for regain the No. 1 spot in this subcategory," Lee said. "UMC was able to corner 36 percent of the pick-up market when it was on top."

She claimed that UMC was the first to introduce the following in pick-ups—automatic transmission, highest engine displacement at 3.2 liters, and the driver side airbag.

Lee explained that the six-speed transmission would mean fuel savings because higher gears mean more efficient fuel consumption.

She added that this was in line with the company's overall thrust to address the public's need for fuel economy.

Further, Lee said the Nissan Frontier Navara would be the only reliable that UMC would be shipping to its completely built units.

"The rest of UMC products are assembled in Laguna from completely knocked down kits," Lee said.

These include the Nissan Frontier, Urvan Escapade and Grand Livina (both vans), and the Nissan Patrol sports utility vehicle.

She said UMC's CEO to CDE talks was in keeping with Nissan Global's commitment to support the local manufacturing of vehicles.

"This was what our [global] president Carlos Ghosn committed to last June when he met with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Singapore," Lee said.

She was referring to Ghosn's statements about Nissan being interested in the assembly of light cars with high local content level in the Philippines.

"The ultimate aim is to help expand the domestic market because more CKD assembly means lower cost of manufacturing, which leads to lower cost of vehicles," Lee said.

Currently, UMC is churning out a total of 400 units a month from its facilities, which Lee said was not even half of the company's production capacity.

"We are studying how we can increase our output from CKD sets with the Nissan income segment in mind," she added.

BIR requires auditors to certify profit statements

By Michelle F. Remo

IN A BID TO PLUG THE LEAKS IN TAX COLLECTION, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has directed corporate taxpayers to have their financial statements certified as accurate by an accredited auditor.

The BIR said in a statement that the issuance of Revenue Regulations 7-2007 was one of the steps it was taking to tighten tax audit processes and address the shortfall in tax collection in the first half.

The regulation states that the auditor's certification should be attached to the annual income tax returns (ITRs) and financial statements that corporate taxpayers submit to the BIR every year.

Requiring the certification from an auditor is seen to discourage corporate taxpayers from underdeclaring their income, revenue officials said.

The new regulation complements an earlier order, Revenue Regulations No. 13-2006, that requires companies to have their financial statements reviewed only by auditors accredited by the BIR.

Prior to the issuance of RR No. 13-2006 in September last year, the BIR just accepted financial statements, even if these were reviewed by auditors not accredited by the BIR.

Revenue officials said the government has been losing substantial revenues, not only because of inefficient processes in tax collection, but also due to dishonesty among taxpayers.

The Department of Finance, mother agency of the BIR, earlier said the government loses about P45 billion in potential tax collection every year because many businesses and professionals do not issue official receipts.

The potential loss exceeds the expected budget deficit of the government this year at P43 billion.

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IN THIS ISSUE
Inspired by the 'Lost Horizon' /C4

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chela Batad-Formoso

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

The cells, they are a-changin'

PERHAPS SOLOMON INspired those lines from the Old Testament: "Gladness of heart is life to a man, joy is what gives him length of days."

Body speak

The human body is a free-flowing network of cells...each are able to communicate with the other. But what are the cells saying?

At this very moment, your body is functioning as it has been programmed to function—you are inhaling then exhaling hydrogen, oxygen, carbon and minerals.

And though your major organs look unchanged from months ago, you are wrong. Change happens on the cellular level.

Just like the skin that replaces itself once a month, the liver undergoes change every six months, the skeleton is completely renewed every three months. By year's end, 98 percent of the atoms in your body will be replaced by new ones. Incredible but true.

All about science

Albert Einstein knew it all along. He theorized the age-old space time model of the universe by reassembling time and space into what is considered a new perspective.

This only means that space and time are relative...with no beginning and no end.

Everything in the universe is being made new. And your body is the size of all its cells that are designed to keep changing.

Cell health and Dr. Navarro

In order to be alive and stay alive, your cells need to be nourished. Enter Dra Belen Navarro, who has introduced a fascinating approach to health and recovery called cellular balancing.

A doctor of medicine, honoris causa, awarded by the Oxford College of Applied Science; and eleven Outstanding Research fellow in Cellular Medicine by the Newton Hall Foundation in England, Dra Belen has devoted his practice to revitalizing the body through a rapid detox.

Judging from the remarkable healing of his patients such as Jason Ho, a 10-year old with multiple sclerosis; Joven Acosta, a 15-year-old with life threatening encephalitis and epilepsy; John Gerald Ignacio, a 50-year-old Canadian who suffered a near fatal heart attack, his medicinal approach is both natural/alternative and remarkable.

Major hospitals have given up on these patients. But today, they live normal lives.

The best case of all is Rebecca Reyes, a 58-year old housewife who became bedridden due to cardiac arrest. But after three days of the balancing treatment she was able to walk again. Today, she regularly attends ballroom dancing classes.

According to the good doctor, the cessation/deterioration of all disease is similar: even if you reverse the stress, you revert back to good health.

Oxygen is essential to the human body for energy and metabolism. However, if it interacts with polyunsaturated fats in the body, free radical damage begins leading to cancer, diabetes, lupus, etc.

Through what he calls membrane stabilizing antioxidants using enzymes and co-enzymes (like Flavonoids—catechin, silibinin and rutamine A, C, E and glutathione coming from whey, plus a host of phytocellar infusions and minerals found in fruits, vegetables, red wine, cocoa, tea and grains), hopeless patients literally become hopeful.

And where once they were near death, today they embrace life. But if you lead a sickly body, an ailing spirit should also be healed.

Hugging as medicine

Modern medicine has come to terms with our powerful touch...that the act of nurturing has immense value healthwise.

When newborn babies are touched, held and caressed, their once growth hormone levels increase and myelin, the protective coating of motor nerves, thickens.

Thus, when a mother lovingly embraces her baby, this very act causes biochemical reactions that sustain life.

Translated into practical terms, a hug = medicine. If a hug is good medicine, then it should be given and taken freely and frequently. It can only result in fewer health.

Never give up

It is never really over. The fight against disease through health management continues to evolve. When confronted with a debilitating illness, do not give up. The best time to end up is when you are down. So, here is a quick note for you—a hug for you soon.

Love and light!

References: Deepak Chopra, "Ageless Body, Timeless Mind"

Dr. Belen Navarro, 8367726/8367727

Celebrate Life with Cory Quirino on Aug. 10, 2-3 p.m., 104 Facial. Free admission to "6 Wellness Sins."

Your Doctor Knows Best

Michelle C. Guerrero, MD, FTFP, FPNA

Question:

The doctors discharged my mother after she had a stroke, however she is paralyzed on the right side of the body and cannot walk, will she recover?

Doctor says...

A stroke or brain attack kills brain cells. In your mother's case the brain cells that had the job of moving the right side of the body can no longer do that function. Your doctor discharged her because the stroke, whether due to a blocked artery (infarct) or rupture of small blood vessels (bleed) is over. In fact, the whole process of an infarct takes only a few days. This "swelling" is what doctors treat, that's why your mother was confined in the hospital for a period of time. When the critical period is over and the doctors are certain that there is no longer danger to your mother's life, they discharged her even if paralysis exists.

So then? How then the recovery? Well, look around you—some patients recover fully, others do not. It makes you wonder why? When brain cells are damaged, how will recovery of function occur?

The brain reorganizes. Similar to any corporation, if a person resigns or retires, someone has to take over his job or replace him. However, this person has to be trained correctly for the job. Current technology tells us a lot about how the brain recovers. This is called **neuroplasticity**, meaning the brain is modifiable and is not rigid. The brain can learn again. The other areas of the brain that is not damaged or new brain cells can be coaxed to take over the function.

This is the reason why your mother is probably referred for rehabilitation in the hospital and was advised to continue even after discharge. The brain can reorganize given the right experience. This is called **experience dependent plasticity**. To do this, your mother has to try to move and use her paralyzed arm and leg. How can this help your mother recover the function of the right side of her body and what are the factors that may interfere with her recovery? These will be answered in next week's column. For additional information, it is always better consult and seek the advice of your doctor.

Dr. Guerrero is a Neurologist. He is the Chairman of the Department of Neurosciences, Davao Medical School Foundation and the Vice President of the Philippine Society of Neurological Rehabilitation. He holds clinic at San Pedro Hospital, Davao City.

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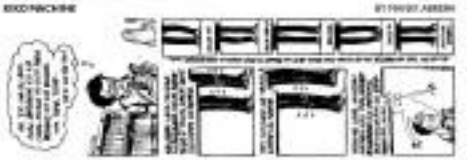
DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEPHEN PASCUAS

EKSKRIMENTE — BY FRED ABREN

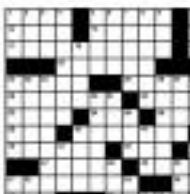


MAGNOGNOMOS — BY JOHN ETTEDGUI

TULDOK — BY PAPA AND TATAY PALAMBLANC

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Jim Page
New York, NY

ACROSS
1 Tot ... (talk)
5 Things clearing records
10 Damage rep
14 Vocalist
15 Prize and a shilling
16 Nose
17 "I'll be in Paris" singer
18 Prehistoric Congolese cats
21 Cambridge sch.
22 Mark from an index
23 Cantonese money
24 Eat Dolly
25 Queen's home
26 Mythical bird
28 Dynamic operation?
32 Wealth
33 Shape
34 Ate a buffet
35 Diligent insect
41 Editor's pocket
42 Ancient
43 Adverse
45 Opposed to
46 Deeds (for cash)
48 Tea-time
51 Tyrannical dictatorships
54 Stadium levels
55 Winged beast
56 Lubricant (like)
60 Tints
61 Red flowers
62 "Love" novel
64 Tycoon
65 Famous author
66 Tried poorer
68 Toby Shiloh's brother
69 Indian dictatorships
70 Hastened up

DOWN
1 Small river
2 Wedding word
3 Modern Family actor
4 Jerks and snaps
5 Nonchalantly puffs
6 Copper source?
7 Words per Coke
8 Complete drain, as one
9 Champions (2)
10 Big ... cat
11 Potty word?
12 Yo (yours)
13 Model Butler
19 Bighorn mountain
20 Drifting bird
27 1 month school
29 Unexpected
30 Ale
31 As a joke
37 Magic diana's mother
38 As written: Lat.
39 Nations: Arg.
41 Drain & the short
43 Temporarily in charge
47 Composer Leonhard
49 Wants a vehicle
50 Transmission element
52 Wheels some more work
53 Services charge
56 Set up
57 Ring around
58 Hunkering
59 Big name in aluminum
63 Tiers legs

Weekend Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

TAURUS (May 21 to June 20): Your bright spirit and charm will help you overcome any obstacle. Put your talents to good use and you will be rewarded handsomely.

GEMINI (June 21 to July 22): Overindulgence could lead to health problems. Keep your eating habits in check.

CANCER (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't be afraid to take a risk when it comes to your career. Your unique ideas will impress the right people.

LEO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be careful not to overextend yourself financially. Don't buy anything you don't need.

VIRGO (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your ability to get along with others will help you get ahead in your career.

LIBRA (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't let your emotions get the best of you. Keep your head and you will be fine.

SCORPIO (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might be overwhelmed by your responsibilities. Ask for help if you need it.

SAGITTARIUS (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Pay attention to your finances. Don't spend money you don't have.

CAPRICORN (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't be afraid to take a risk when it comes to your career. Your unique ideas will impress the right people.

AQUARIUS (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your ability to get along with others will help you get ahead in your career.

PISCES (March 21 to April 19): Don't let your emotions get the best of you. Keep your head and you will be fine.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

9	7				6			
8		1		4		2		
	6				2		3	
			2			5		7
	8						2	
6		4			9			
	5		9				7	
		8		7		3		4
			8				9	5

Difficulty Level ★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	9	6	1	5	2	3	8	7
5	3	8	9	7	6	1	4	2
1	7	2	8	4	3	5	6	9
7	5	9	3	8	4	2	1	6
6	8	1	7	2	5	9	3	4
3	2	4	6	1	9	7	5	8
2	1	3	4	6	7	8	9	5
8	6	5	2	9	1	4	7	3
9	4	7	5	3	8	6	2	1

DREAM BODY Body Spa president Katherine Tee, Cory Quirino and Georgie Sison

HDI NETWORK Philippines Inc. (formerly High Desert Philippines) offers Liquid Rayos jelly that helps revitalize and rejuvenate mind and body to slow down aging. The product promotes regeneration of cells, restores vitality, relieves stress, helps improve skin texture, among others. HDI Network is affiliated with the United States-based CC Pellaz Inc., one of the largest and oldest tea product companies in the world. All products are BFAD- and Halal-approved. HDI Network is at 31/E Suite 303, Jollibee Plaza, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. www.hdinetwork.com.ph; tel. 4339999.

New concept spa

DREAM BODY SPA, A NEW CONCEPT FITness spa combining traditional health principles with the latest technological innovations, has opened at V-Mall, Greenhills.

Offering an innovative approach to health and weight management, Dream Body Spa promises you a body you have always dreamed of "with minimal time and effort. You can also expect a dramatic rejuvenation of your health and an overall sense of well-being.

Instead of doing the work, the machines do it for you.

The Hula Chair does the Hula as you sit on it. You can feel your spine align gently and your blood circulation improve. It also improves your abs and mid-section.

A vibration machine originally developed by the Soviet Space Program and America's National Aeronautics and Space Administration for astronauts has been found to stop bone loss.

It also helps increase bone density and strengthen muscle tones, among other things.

You can lie down on the Acupressure Thermal Massage Bed, a state-of-the-art tool for natural healing. Computer controlled heated jade rollers will move over various muscle groups of the back and 141 acupressure points along the meridians of the body, loosening tense muscles.

Wrap up your program for the day with a 20-30 minute session in the far Infrared Sauna Cabin or dry sauna.

The Dream Body Spa is located at Unit F-431, 4/F, V-Mall Building, Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan, Metro Manila; tel. 7218001, 7218002; www.dreambodyspa.com.

Free cataract screening

RONQUILLO MEDICAL CARE INSTITUTE celebrates Sight Saving Month this August with a free cataract screening/consultation for people 60 years old and above.

This is the fourth year the ambulatory surgi-center in Greenwood Cyberzone is offering the service.

Cataract usually affects individuals in their 50s-60s.

RMCI is in Eastwood and SM Mall of Asia [tel. 687.1165/1860.1779 or 6922-0119/922 for Eastwood, and 5060507 to 09 or 6905-8779/812 for MOA; www.ronquillomedical.com].

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What are cataracts and what are its symptoms?

A cataract is an eye condition characterized by progressive clouding of the normally clear lens of the eye. The eye next images when light passes through the transparent lens and gets focused on the retina, the eye's light-sensitive layer that sends visual signals to the brain. To retain good vision and help prevent these images, it is necessary that the lens remains clear. Although many factors can lead to this condition, the development of cataracts is largely age-related. Majority of the population over sixty years of age may already have different degrees of lens clouding. The most common is gradual, progressive and painless blurring of vision. Aside from this, individuals may also experience glare and light sensitivity which tend to be bothersome. Other associated symptoms are poor night vision, fading or yellowing of colors, needing brighter light to read, halos around light, or double vision in one eye. To date, there is currently no proven medical treatment to reverse cataracts. Once they form, surgical removal is the only known way to restore clear vision.

Call 1-800-1441-6688 or (632) 867-3557 Email ph.contact@hp.com

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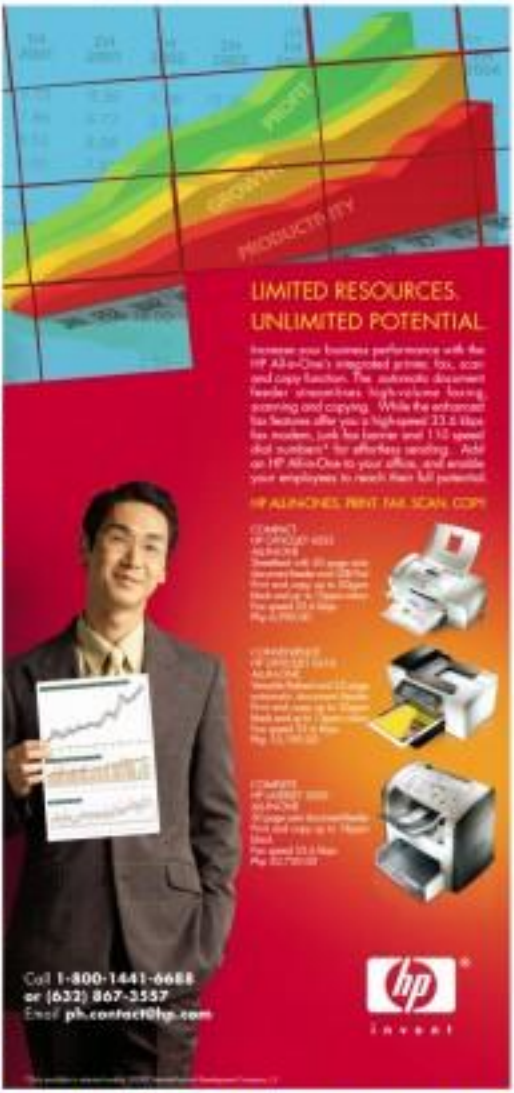

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TESS Tuico and Albert Yan

EDSA Shangri-La's Lorna Gamalinda and ADB's Arnaldo S. Wacan

PHILIPPINE Teller's Annie Sue Diego, Angelique and William Hamilton-Whyte, and InQuirk's Nina Prieto-Valdes

EDSA Angeles, Peggy Angeles, Cathy Dugan, Kay Kwok Gonzo, Andrea Kwok-Schramm and Greg Dugan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo

TOURISM Secretary Joseph Durano

UK AMBASSADOR to the Philippines Peter Buckingham and wife Jill

Rejuvenation the Himalayan way

DIANA Manalaysay-Santangard and Arsenio Jerome Alonzo

STUNNING Priscilla Morrelles

LEAVE IT TO THE ANGERI-La group to have the best of the best pampering.

Like Shangri-La's latest mega store in the 6th, luxurious Chi Spa, which had a grand opening with our President Macapagal-Arroyo as the ten special guest of honor, dubbings. Another grand lady joined in for the opening, Pinoy Implementation Committee chair Kay Kwok-Gonzo, no less.

A secluded sanctuary it is inspired by the beautiful tropical forest of Shangri-La (captured in Anna Hilton's book, "Lost Horizon" (as if you didn't know, pairongan). Chi Spa draws from the origin of the big, old of Shangri-La, as amid the gorgeous Himalayan landscape.

With over 3,000 sqm of space, Edsa's Shangri-La Chi is the biggest, most awesome spa in Cento Manila.

Nestled in the hotel's east Garden Wing, the Chi Spa boasts of tons of luxurious treatments, including indigenous to Philippines to spice up its menu, no less, pahengan.

Check out the award-winning Himalayan Healing Stone massage and the Mountain Tranquil Bath drawn from the ancient healing practices of the Himalayan region. I'm the Dagdagan, a traditional foot massage using bamboo sticks employed by indigenous mountain tribes in the Philippines and the Himalaya, a Southeast Philippines term meaning "rejuvenating sea breeze," among others, dubbings.

Ahh, nothing like spending a day in a good spa.

NEXT-GENERATION designers Joey Samson, Louie Claparols, Cary Santiago and Pennie

PAMELA Picazo, Angela Alarcon and Bianca Gonzalez

THISTLE Serra and Kuba Mamalais

HELENE Belmonte and Paolo Arevalo

ANA Rilang and Wanda Lowenstein

CHRIS Lopez, Pen Reyes and JC Buenvia

Fashionable pharm

For several last years, fashion shows have been staged with top brand cell phones, pairongan. Recently, two matched humming

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak Easy Share camera

Movement at the Sanford Tent.

"The first generation" showed in the collections of 30 talented young designers: Inocencio Garcia, James Reyes, Patty Ismaguin, Cary Santiago, Preciosita, Ferdinand Aarcino, Joey Samson and LJ Posadas, accessory designer Wyne Nyna Ong, and shoe designer Brian Sarmiento, dubbings.

As the fashion forward creations were displayed on the ramp, the people one usually sees as classes or laundrygos were dazzled by the designers of the next generation.

The designers showed us some gorgeous items as we sipped wine and nibbled cocktail food from Mom Sita's with the likes of Mom Sita's bagoong MEC CHIPS, Gabbi Lopez, tennis and Jessica Lopez, Thelma Bautista-San Juan and Chris Lopez.

Bursting runs down from New York for a broadway run super model Anna Sui's dolls. Also there were young fashionistas Tessa Dungca and Xeng Zulueta of Sky Couture, and Alfa Paredes, plus tons of others like them. Also noticed that designers Raja Laurel, Randy Ortiz, Amiros Arasas-Alimon, Arnel Papa, Louis Claparols and Kadwa Guillermo-Prieto were chatting out the several crowds, dubbings.

The Samsung Metrowear series will continue in September. The must-see gala show will be in November, dubbings.

The Next Generation was sponsored by Metrobank Foreign, Filipinescia, Elreal Perfumed and Alta Isotonic, naturellement.

Launch

It is the first birthday of Maldives Resorts Inc., licensee for local Philippines. The company celebrated with the launch of Perfect-X Carbon and Gold-IX, the newest line of soft lotions and ointments.

A fantastic fashion show was held at The Podium, with the special participation of Tyner, Hapa, Gamrade and Look Models Philippines, pairongan.

The first of its kind in the Philippines, Perfect Carbon line features Cocoa Fibre and pecan and walnut activated carbon from coconut shells. The material provides effective moisture management, absorbs odors and offers ultraviolet protection.

The Gold-IX line features liquefied gold that moves with you. Moisture Sticking keeps you cool and dry. It also has UV protection.

Dual, not man-told, was one of the fastest growing brands in the United States and had become one of the most recognizable brands of leisure and sportswear in the world.

EDSA Shangri-La GM Christopher Cleo

EDSA Shangri-La's Ned Rundown

TRCM Cris Bautista

BETH Rosa, Pisha Bulani, Bob Miranda and Yara Pineda

HYLENE del Rosario, Norah Miranda, Christine Mathay and Mark Bo. Ana

VIVIAN Soriano

IRON Tolls, Bill Velasco, Dynes Delgado and Sabrina Arnall

MARLY Hassan and Dolce Tesoro

For over 60 years, Ford has been synonymous with high quality casual apparel that is forever classic and versatile. The brand has its roots in upper-class European fashion and sports. To this day, Ford remains a true style icon.

Check out its lines of menswear in Ford and boutiques near you, dubbings, at SM Mall of Asia, Robinson's Place Pyrites, Monumental Alabang, The Podium, The Block South Edsa, Trinoma, Festival Mall and Ayala Center Cebu.

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Nameless psychic ability

THERE IS ANOTHER TYPE OF PSYchic ability or power that is so rare that researchers have not even invented a name for it.

It is essentially a person's ability to hasten or accelerate the natural biological processes.

Hungarian healer Oscar Estebany, for example, had been shown by scientists to have the ability to hasten the healing of deliberately inflicted wounds in experimental mice under controlled laboratory conditions.

The well-known Israeli psychic Uri Geller demonstrated the necessary ability to germinate within minutes radish seeds on his palm simply by mentally communicating them to grow.

I witnessed this remarkable demonstration of Geller's psychic power during an international convention in Düsseldorf, Germany in 1996. About a thousand other people in the audience also witnessed the event.

But an even more extraordinary and almost miraculous psychic power was demonstrated by the Brazilian pharmacist Thomaz Mosmo Cornelio. He has shown, in at least four occasions, his power to make unfertilized eggs hatch into live chicks in less than 10 minutes!

Detailed account

The following is a detailed description of how Cornelio did it, as reported by my close friend, consultant clinical psychologist, hypnotherapist, psychic researcher and professor Dr. Lin Pulos, in his fascinating book "Miracles and Other Realities" (written with Gary Bohnsack):

"The most provocative and far reaching of all his 'biological experiments' defied the basic laws of life itself. On four occasions, Thomaz has taken fresh, unfertilized eggs and 'hatched' them into live chicks.

"The first incident occurred in 1982 in the company of several friends and observers. He requested 15 eggs be purchased and placed on the table. Thomaz clipped into a very deep trance with eyes open and unfocused.

"Very slowly, he picked up an egg, stared at it for 20 seconds and then rowed it against the middle of his forehead. He performed this curious ritual with each egg. He cracked each egg one by one and broke their contents into a large tin bowl.

"Then he began hyperventilating, the wrenched both arms out and with palms down over the eggs began pulsing and releasing energy into the bowl. Slowly the yolks began to change their texture, solidifying and becoming darker. Different dynamics began developing and within five minutes, the first forms of baby chicks could be identified.

"Over the next two minutes, the internal organs of the embryos could be seen through their membranes. After nine minutes, the first sounds of life were heard—the 'cheep-cheeping' of little chicks. From the 15 eggs, nine baby chicks were hatched."

Struck by lightning

How Cornelio obtained such miraculous powers, no one knows. But Lev mentioned in his book that when Thomaz was 12 years old, lightning struck his bamboo fishing pole as he fished in a lake.

"His body was catapulted several feet above the ground. He could see what was happening as if he was outside his body. Then he heard a voice that told him he was especially protected by sacred forces and that he would perform strange phenomena and help people, but he wouldn't use his powers for his own benefit."

When he gained consciousness, according to Lev, 12 hours had elapsed. Thomaz believed he had had contact with extraterrestrials who gave him extraordinary psychic powers.

The other baffling psychic powers that Thomaz demonstrated were those of bending pillows touching the object, transforming a certain belt into a metal necklace, transforming a coin into a ring and transporting a stationery of one country to another.

What do we make of such powers? Cornelio has displayed over and over again?

Dr. Pulos says: 'In a sense, Thomaz represents a symbolic man on our cultural horizon. He is creating widening rifts in the topmost surfaces of our consciousness and helping us realize the confines of our physical reality. It has been said that the most powerful source of consciousness known to man is an open mind. Perhaps that might be a starting point for deciphering Thomaz.'

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernesto C. Velarde

Letters to the Editor: inquirer.net.ph/blogs/letters/default.asp to CDN Global and CDN Extra; e-mail us at entertainment@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

THE PRESS CON warns too much of a headache for Angel Cabrearra, Angel Locsin's father. But it's all in a day's work for talent manager Bunny Agulia, right. "Out of sight, out of mind! Nice Hi-Lumin

Not the last word

...on Angel Locsin's latest career move

By Harriet R. Cruz

NO END IS IN SIGHT FOR this long drawn-out issue.

As soon as Angel Locsin comes home she will sign a contract with ABS-CBN," said the young star's talent manager, Bunny Agulia, confirming the three-week-old rumor.

The Kapamilya network hosted a press conference on Friday night precisely to announce this hotshot negotiated 4000-CBN Corporate Communications head Bong Osorio, "[000-CBN is part of this whole controversy behind the scene."

Added Agulia: "This is not about money; it's about Angel's well-being. With ABS-CBN, she will have enough time for school, business and her family. That's what's really important to her right now."

After present to answer questions that night, aside from Agulia, were Locsin's father Angel Cabrearra and Agulia's lawyer Joy Aleno.

Is Angel getting whether deal?

"No, although she will not be co-managed by ABS-CBN's artist center.

Angel was a member of ABS-CBN's Star Circle Bands 9. Why did you sign her up with GMA 7 in the first place?

Cabrearra: She was just 14 when ABS-CBN offered us a three-year talent manage-

MORE ON P2

John Estrada's new girl is Ms Earth '04

JOHN ESTRADA IS ON CLOUD nine these days with Ms Earth '04 Priscilla Meirelles.

"We've been together for almost two months," John reveals. "I like her because, even if she's Brazilian, her attitude is like that of a Pinay and she's very endearing. First's important to me that kind-endearing things so there for us. It's good that she can handle that. She has met my kids and they get along well."

There's certainly life after the "Beauteful" for him. Hopefully, Ms Earth will be the last woman in John's colorful world.

Birthday Bulloy

CESAR Montano celebrated his birthday quietly in his hometown Bohol.

"I spent it painting and talking to my nieces. I also jammed with my brothers Jhanred and my son Angelo. Sometime long leave at home. Sandrine and I were on the phone while I was painting. She greeted me a hundred times (laughs). I don't need big parties. I get

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

true happiness from simple things," says Bulloy.

Ogie's note

OGIE Alcasid sent in the text: "My sons the Boy. She's nominated for Princess Chaos Favorite Female Artist in the Asian Awards for the song "Till I Met You." You Arab U 2 & send to 2600. Thanks!"

Pls or bec. Regine is Ogie's choice. He should be nominated as Best Supporting Boyfriend!

Say 'cheese'

SHE thinks it all stems from there. She's having the time of her life with a half-Brit half-Pinoy model. "We're still

in the getting-to-know-you stage. We go out but we're always with a group," Willday say. We in love now!

Xtreme pop star

XTREME Magic Sing recently signed up pop star Sarah Geronimo as its latest endorser. Sarah was chosen because just like its product, she is a family favorite.

Sarah will be promoting the latest Xtreme Magic Sing C1100. It is an all-in-one wireless karaoke system, with a remote control that selects song numbers and operates playback, external video input, and a recording function (for detail visit www.magicsing.com.ph).

Not for those who are tone deaf like me, Xtreme magic sing can also work wonders.

Personal

BINIBINI pa! na salamat to Sophie-nem making Mayor Dan Lim for an

JOHN TO

ROUNDUP

Hartnett wins hearts

MT. DIWINAWAL, Mindoro, Compostela Valley—"Do I really need that?

This was what Hollywood star Josh Hartnett reportedly said when he saw what his 69 Filipino hosts had prepared for him.

Bryan Cataluna, owner and driver of the car used by the actor in unveiling Steve Jhonn Darone City, said Hartnett was overwhelmed with the welcome accorded him, and the hours-security detail.

Cataluna described Hartnett as a "very down to earth," asking may specimen photo Mindanao, and expressing amazement at the skills of "skyhi" (passenger motorcycle) drivers in the hilly area.

He claimed Hartnett immediately "fell in love" with Diwalwal. "He said he will return more extended."

When they arrived here on Friday Catalbera said it was pouring. He said Hartnett, a six-footer, offered to hold the umbrella that they shared, "because he is taller than me."

Jessie Refuga, of the movie outfit Production 16, also described Hartnett as "nice."

"When we arrived," she said, "he gamely posed for snapshots with fans."

Hartnett's first meal on location was of mixed vegetables, according to Antonio Munoja, chef at the Delagon Suites, where the production staff stayed for the night.

Munoja said the actor ate "some fish fillet, mixed vegetables and rice spoon-full of rice."

After dinner, the chef said, Hartnett had beer, then played cards games.

The actor was offered some durian, but politely declined upon smelling it. Dennis Soriano and Josefie Badilla, reporter Mindanao

Spice Girl's revenge

LOS ANGELES—Spice Girl singer Melanie Brown has filed a paternity suit against actor Eddie Murphy, asking for child support for her 2-month-old daughter. Gloria Allred, lawyer for the "Scary Spice" member of the 1990s British girl band, said the lawsuit was filed in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Reuters MELANIE BROWN

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4 LICENSE TO WED
5 HARRY POTTER 5
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Not the last word

Anonymous

want control. She wasn't to focus on being successful at the time.

Again, She was barely 16 when she signed up as my talent. At that time, I was trying to work with GMA 7. I made her my cost for a role in "Idol ka si Gigi" since there weren't any offers from ABS-CBN. She got the part.

It is true that you demanded that your other talents be given work at ABS-CBN, too?

That's not how things go. If my talents don't have work on the rival channel, it's just natural that I offer their services here.

Did you have the power to turn down GMA 7 shows that weren't good for Angel, in your opinion?

We follow protocol. We can't go

them has thought of dropping us.

You said you were out about to serve this with GMA 7. Why did you agree to be interviewed on "Startoon"?

We said yes to "The Buzz" only when we were sure we were hearing GMA 7.

Is it true that when Angel arrives from London, she will start shooting a telenovela with Dick Gutierrez and Christopher de Leon?

We haven't received any offer of that sort.

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www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

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1 HARRY POTTER 5 – THE
2 LICENSE to WED
3 OUIJA
4 DIE HARD 4
5 RATATOUILLE
6 SHIKING of JAPAN
7 CASA
8 indieBone - BNATS
9 THE SIMPSONS
10 CSI 117

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2 CSI 117
3 RATATOUILLE
4 CASA
5 SHIKING of JAPAN
6 OUIJA
7 THE SIMPSONS
HARRY POTTER 5

METRO EAST

1 LICENSE to WED
2 RATATOUILLE
3 OUIJA
4 SHIKING of JAPAN
5 CSI 117
6 THE SIMPSONS
7 HARRY POTTER 5
8 CASA

NOVALICHES

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 THE SIMPSONS
3 CASA
4 LICENSE to WED
5 OUIJA
6 RATATOUILLE

PIONEER

1 OUIJA
2 THE SIMPSONS MOVIE
3 RATATOUILLE
4 BLIND DATING

STA. ROSA

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 BUG
3 RATATOUILLE
4 OUIJA

LIPA

1 RATATOUILLE
2 OUIJA
3 BUG
4 WILDERNESS
5 BORDERTOWN

DASMARINAS

1 CAPE KARMA
2 RATATOUILLE
3 OUIJA
4 HARRY POTTER 5
5 THE SIMPSONS MOVIE

IMUS

1 BLIND DATING
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 LICENSE to WED
4 RATATOUILLE
5 CASA
6 OUIJA

ANGELES

1 RATATOUILLE
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 OUIJA
4 THE SIMPSONS MOVIE

TARLAC

1 OUIJA
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 VACANCY

STARMILLS

1 IN THE LAND of WOMEN
2 RATATOUILLE
3 BUG
4 OUIJA
5 PLANET TERROR
6 HARRY POTTER 5

BACOLOD

1 NEXT
2 FRACTURE
3 OUIJA
4 RATATOUILLE
5 RESERVE
6 HARRY POTTER 5 / THE LAST MINZY

ILOILO

1 NEXT
2 OUIJA
3 RATATOUILLE
4 PLANET TERROR
5 THE SIMPSONS
6 HARRY POTTER 5

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Ayala Malls Cinemas

OPENS TOMORROW AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

"A MASTERPIECE. ★★★★! I LOVED THIS MOVIE. AN ACCOMPLISHED WORK OF ART."

SUNDANCE

"★★★★! A HAUNTING, ENGROSSING AND INTELLIGENT THRILLER.

Los Angeles Times

"... A REAL PLEASURE TO WATCH... ... A SKILLFULL THRILLER."

"★★★★! A KNOCKOUT. IT SPINS A WEB THAT WILL PULL YOU IN. A thriller that really thrills."

FROM THE SCREENWRITER OF OUT OF SIGHT AND GET SHORTY

NOKIA

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Most memorable performances

PEOPLE MAKE A BIG DEAL ABOUT BEST Actor and Best Actress lists. That's OK because, when the choices are credible, they help set the acting standards that are so badly needed in these compromised and compromising times.

But judging actors by their lifelong careers can be dicey—because, truth to tell, most "great" thespians don't come up with exceptional performances all the time.

All too often, they accept underdesigning roles to cash in on the table. So, when they're cited in Best Actor or Actress lists, some people gasp, "They weren't he (or she!) also really [cute in Otis film] or [that TV show]?"

Instead of thinking, "Ewan," let's focus today on actors' most memorable screen performances. You may have your own preferences, but these are the freshest recollection of the film buffs we've been checking with this past week:

Nora Aunor's most memorable performance? Her film buffs would say in "Himala," where she played a "fake" healer. She was powerfully cast in the role because of her Iloca-merger looks. Another plus factor for her was that her chest, as a superstar, she was "sheltered" by telefilms, so her character's tragic scholarly also commanded on her own stellar screen mediocrity.

For our part, however, we think Nora's most memorable performance was in "Bona," where she played a diehard movie fan who was used and abused by her own fan idol, until she saves herself in the end.

Once again, Nora's superstar status "consumated" on her movie fan role, and vice-versa, and this gave the movie an added level of exploitation commodity—not that was true-to-life—to behold.

Vilma Santos' Stella both chose her staple stripper role in "Burlesk Queen," where she came away for the first time,

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 RATATOUILLE	2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM	3 LICENSE TO WED	4 EVASIVE			
GLORIETTA 4	1 RATATOUILLE	2 EVASIVE	3R THE SIMPSONS				
	4 SHADOW OF JAPAN	5 HARRY POTTER 5 THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	6 BOURNE ULTIMATUM	7 LICENSE TO WED			
GREENBELT 1	1 LICENSE TO WED	2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM					
GREENBELT 3	1R BOURNE ULTIMATUM	2R BOURNE ULTIMATUM					
	3 RATATOUILLE	4 LICENSE TO WED	5 THE SIMPSONS				
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1R BOURNE ULTIMATUM	2 RATATOUILLE					
	3 THE SIMPSONS	4 EVASIVE	5 LICENSE TO WED				
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 RATATOUILLE	2 THE SIMPSONS	3 WHO'S NEXT 3	4 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN			
MARKET! MARKET!	1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM	2 LICENSE TO WED					
	3 RATATOUILLE	4 SHADOW OF JAPAN	5R THE SIMPSONS				
TRINOMA	1 EVASIVE	2 HARRY POTTER 5 THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	3 LICENSE TO WED	4 RATATOUILLE			
	5 THE SIMPSONS	6 SHADOW OF JAPAN	7R BOURNE ULTIMATUM				

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta: 750-1515 | Greenbelt: 757-0623 to 24 | Alabang Town Center: 401-2181, 772-1868 | Ayala Center Cebu: (032) 231-1515 to 19 | Market! Market!: 846-1515 | Trinoma: 981-1888

Glorietta — Culinary Mart by Century Tuna, August 11 & 12, 2007 at the Activity Center

Greenbelt — Shop & Travel at Greenbelt 1 Promo: Get a chance to win exciting prizes and a trip for two to Boracay for every P500 worth of purchase at any Greenbelt 1 establishment from July 1 to September 30, 2007

Alabang Town Center — Alabang Town Center Grand Grocery Shopping Spree Promo: July 1 to August 31, 2007. Refund

Ayala Center Cebu — Sofitel Kiosk, August 1 to 31, 2007 at the AFEC Access

Market! Market! — Mechanical Action, August 10 to 12, 1pm - 3:30 pm & 4 pm at the Activity Center

Christian Dior — Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids, at REP's Onstage Theater - Ayala, August 11, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 867-0710

Ayala Museum — Discovery Photomarathon for Students, August 18 to 26, 2007. For more info, pls. call 757-0138 to 39 loc. 18 or email museum@ayalamuseum.org

Tri Noma — Drive with Security, August 10 & 11 at the Activity Center. BPI EPS Event, August 12, 2007 at the Activity Center

Glorietta · Greenbelt · Alabang Town Center · Ayala Center Cebu · Trinoma · Market! Market!